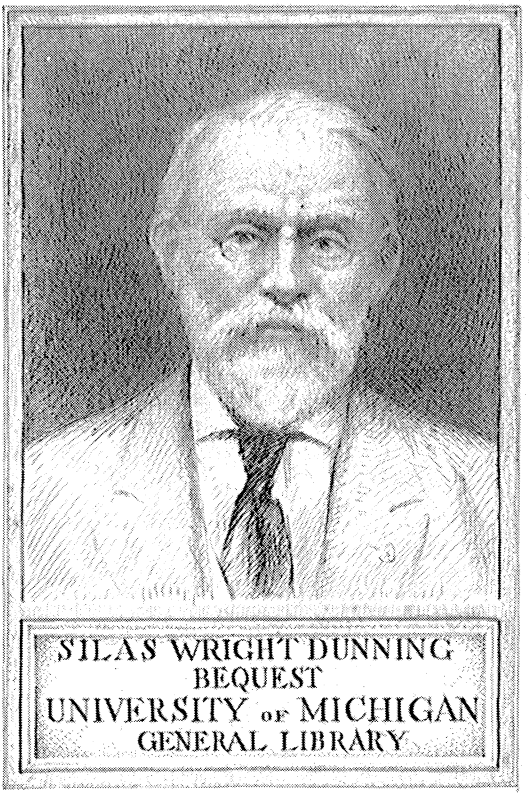
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Mrs. Shakespeare Wood

With the author's kind regards

Xmas 1869

SONGS.

LONDON: PRINTED BY
SPOTTISWOODE AND CO., NEW-STREET SQUARE
AND PARLIAMENT STREET

SONGS

OF

A WAYFARER.

BY

WILLIAM DAVIES.

LONDON:
LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.
1869.

WHEN I WALK BY MYSELF ALONE,
IT DOTH ME GOOD MY SONGS TO RENDER.

Old Song.

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SONGS OF A WAYFARER.

I.

SPRING.

MERRY it is in the greenwood,
When flowers begin to spring,
To lie upon the daisied sod,
And hear the cuckoo sing.
Cuckoo, cuckoo!
He cries, and flies from tree to tree.
O, what a jolly bird is he!

The ringdove through the woodland calls,
Coo, coo! with loving voice;
Whilst honey-throated nightingales
Make every heart rejoice.
Sweet, sweet, sweet, sweet!
They chant from brake and bursting bough;
Warm sunshine gleaming brightly through.

Also at ruddy dawn the lark
Shoots up with warbled song,
And budding grove and dewy park
Ring with his note ere long.

Cheer, dear, dear, cheer:
Come here, ith' clear,
And leave your beds! he, fluttering, cries,
Bidding each nymph and swain arise
To celebrate the Spring.

II.

SUMMER SONG.

WHEN gossips love to sit ith' sun;
And bees come laden home at noon:
When fledgling birds begin to call;
And peaches ripen on the wall:
O, then is the sweet haytime:
The merry, merry playtime.
Sing, Ho! the sweet summer prime:
The happy, humming time.

When swallows skim the glassy pool;
And cattle seek the shallows cool:
When lads and lasses all arow
After the mowers blithely go:
O, then is the sweet haytime:
The merry, merry playtime.
Sing, Ho! the sweet summer prime:
The happy, humming time.

When oft at eve the shepherd lad
Pipes beneath the oak tree shade;
And men and maidens to the sound
With nimble footsteps beat the ground:

Then what a merry playtime
Is the happy, happy haytime!
Sing, Ho! the sweet summer prime:
The golden, flowery time.

III.

AS through the fields I late was going,
All in the month of May,
I lighted on two lovers wooing,
At the close of day.
He would kiss; but she said, No;
Shepherdesses must not so.
Then he praised her hair and eyes;
Mixed his flattery with sighs.
She said, Maidens must be wise
All in the month of May.
Tra la la!

But love be long or love be short,
Love be sad or gay,
Love doth make us all his sport;
For he will have his day.
Thus as he pleaded, though she smiled,
Love at last her heart beguiled.
Yes and No, with both and neither
Love did weave his tender tether;
And they sang this song together,
All in the month of May:
Tra la la!

IV.

O WHAT foolish thing is this:
Fie, Love, fie!
To make an Eden of a kiss
With a gilded lie.
Love in this is much to blame:
He hath put our lives to shame;
Making us forswear the same
With his honeyed lie.

Happiness their souls shall miss—
Sweet Love, fie!
Who believe the airy bliss
Of thy pretty lie.
Soon thy sun is changed to rain:
Soon thy pleasure turns to pain:
Out! nor visit us again
With thy canting lie.

V.

SHALL we leave our trust and truth,
And the primrose hopes of youth,
For that men are faithless grown;
Loving with their lips alone?
Say not so. Oh, no, no!
Hearts of maids are fashioned so.

Love is but an April hour:
Love is but a fading flower:
Love is but a fleeting bliss:
Love is but a vanished kiss.
Say not so. Ah, no, no!
Hearts of maids were ever so.

VI.

CLELIA.

WHO is this who walks the vale
Clothed in white, and on her brow
Bears a perfumed coronal
Twined of rarest flowers that grow?

This is Clelia, whom the Graces
Die to clasp in their embraces.
From the fields the soft winds meet her:
From the groves sweet voices greet her:
Every living thing comes to her:
Savage beasts are tame to woo her:
And in the skies
Night's starry eyes
Do darkly wander up and down,
So blinded by her own,
That we mortals only know
Heaven's glory in their light below.

Then, sweet shepherds, hither bring
Garlands bright with dews of morn:
Beat the tabor, pipe and sing
To her whose beauty doth adorn

All the greenest ways of spring,
And its tender blossoming,
With a newer, finer grace
Shining in her form and face.

VII.

PRIMROSE TIME.

Donne e fanciulle, chi ha gentil core,
Pigli del tempo, seguitando amore.
OLD TROUBADORE SONG.

THIS world was formed for maid and man;
So each must find a fellow.
It hath been so since the world began,
And marigolds were yellow.

For she who wastes her summer prime,
And coldly doth eschew it,
Shall in the winter of her time
With vain repentance rue it.

Then, prithee, say not, Nay; but, Yea,
Whilst primroses are blooming:
For springtime will not always stay
The winter that is coming.

VIII.

O ODOURED, milkwhite lily, honey-hearted,
If she I love should pluck thee in the morning,
Bedropt with dewy tears, well-pleased to place thee,
(Most happy lily!) in her whiter bosom,

Tell her, sweet flower, ere thou fadest wholly,
The lily dies; nor doth the red rose linger:
Only the love of warm hearts true and tender,
When these are vanished, lives and blooms for ever.

IX.

WIND thy horn, thou shepherd youth,
Wind thy horn with merry mouth:
See o'er the meads fair Flora comes;
Her port rare graces showeth.
For it's happy day when the rose tree blooms,
With hey and with hey, be blithe and merry!
And vanished are the wintry glooms,
And sunshine woos the pouting cherry:
When birds do greet
Their songs full sweet,
And painted blossoms everywhere
With hedgerow scents do take the air.

X.

SNOWDROPS.

SWEET snowdrops, earliest children of the year;
Meek nuns with downcast looks, so white ye come,
It is as if the snow itself should bloom.

As some fair maiden on whose pale pale cheek
Death feeds; but in her calm bright eyes
The hopeful dawn doth rise
Of a more glorious life she cannot speak,

Though in her heart its lordly music flows
Breathing the earnest of a full repose:
So are ye tender flow'rs,
Pledges of sunny hours,
And that sweet life the happier season blows,
When, hid in orchard leaves, the linnet oft
Delights to cheer his mate, and o'er the croft
The lark, that hath so long a lay
It takes him all the day,
Awakes the morning, whistling loud and clear.

XI.

THE THORN IN THE ROSE.

I DID not think that love's sweet bliss
Had so much poison in its kiss:
I did not think that scorn could be
Beneath the words he swore to me:

I did not think the roses' bloom
Could show so fair beside the tomb;
Nor that their sweetness did but hide
The dusty charnel there beside.

If I had known how frail they were;
How sharp the thorns which they did bear,
I would have left them on the stem,
Nor ever sought to gather them.

He wooed me in the fresh springtime,
Ere April buds had lost their rime;

But ere the autumn days were done,
He left me for another one.

Too dear, too sweet my hopes have been;
Too short and swift my summer's green.
O weary world! my heart is sore;
For I shall find him nevermore.

XII.

SIX ripe apples grew red on a tree,
When a little boy came with his bow and his arrows,
Midst the cooing of doves and the chirping of sparrows:
With his bow and his arrows he shot down three:
O, the sweet summer sunshine is bright on the lea,
And sparkles along the meadow.

Three ripe apples grew red on a tree;
But the little birds came with chirrup and call:
With chirrup and call they ate up them all:
Red apples for them; withered leaflets for me:
For the wintry moon is cold on the lea,
And my heart lies dead in its shadow.

XIII.

A JEALOUS storm-cloud crossed our sky,
Blighting our best of blisses:
I gave my love some angry words,
But ended them with kisses.

Since that sad day my empty heart
Its fondest idol misses:
She gave me back my angry words,
But, oh! she kept my kisses.

XIV.

MAID MARGERY.

MAID Margery went to the rivulet's edge
(Like Midas the king) one day,
And whispered a word to the rushes and sedge:
Just whispered, and went away.
Then her lover stept down to the rivulet's edge
To inquire what she did say:
I love my true love, repeated the sedge:
I will love him for ever and aye.

But winter came freezing the rivulet's edge,
And clouding the summer day:
And though to the storm-wind the whistling sedge
Kept singing and crying alway,
I love my love, and his faith is my pledge:
I will love him for ever and aye:
Yet nobody came to the rivulet's edge
To listen to what it might say.

XV.

He. GOOD-BYE, sweet love, since time at last
doth part us.
She. And shall it be in cruel time to thwart us?
No, no; for I will follow thee.

He. Whither, O, whither?
She. Through dale and down;
By thorpe and town;
Through frost and sun
Till life be done:
For ever together.
He. Nay, then, come on.
Both. Still, love together
Through all sorts of weather,
Till life shall be done.

XVI.

THE ROSE-MESSAGE.

GO, crimson blushing rose,
Close-fold this glowing kiss within thy heart,
And lay it where pure ivory gleams dispart
Her blossomed lips, and whisper all my woes.

Go, take this sigh I breathe,
And, lying on her gently heaving breast,
Breathe back my odoured sigh, blushing thy best,
And tell her how I wait her love or death.

Go, bear for dew this tear,
To mirror but one look of her bright eye,
Then let it rise to heaven and star my sky,
Lighting my night with her own radiance clear.

XVII.

SAW you ever the soft-petaled lips
Of bursting roses, red ith' prime oth' year:
Or watched the globèd dew that lightly slips,
From bud to bud, a glittering love-tear,
Its rare-sweet kiss bestow?
Such the lips and such the kiss of one I know.

Marked you ever summer butterfly
Living in love of sunshine pure and bright:
Or, when ten thousand stars look from the sky,
Stood lapt in gracious dews of perfumed night;
The rich wind blowing low?
Such the love and such the grace of one I know.

Gazed you ever on an April cloud
Swathed in billowy wreaths of airy snow:
Or the white moon, stately and silver browed,
That ever with this turning ball below
With constant steps doth go?
So bright, so pure, so true this one I know.

XVIII.

CARIOLA ALOLO.

WHEN the green grass is growing, gold daffodils blowing;
All dight for the dance the blithe virgin band;
Her form is the finest, her air the divinest:
Light of limb, slight of waist as a white willow wand.

And then for the pleasure her beaming eyes treasure;
For her low-flowing tresses what words shall I choose;
For her mouth's balsam-breathing, my ravished heart wreathing
With tender lips smiling of dainty sweet use?
To sound forth her praises and exquisite graces
Bring the shawm and the trumpet and the tambourine:
Cariola Alolo blow high and blow low:
Cariola Alolo, my heart's fair queen.

Dance over the meadow, through sunshine and shadow:
Fair is the fairest and foul far away.
Her bright beauty quaffing, right joyously laughing,
The sweet summer useth all the merry day.
The fountain is falling; the shrill lark is calling;
Rich melodies float from the borders of morn;
Blue bells athirsting; red peonies bursting
My beauty of beauties aglow to adorn.
To sound forth her praises and exquisite graces
Bring the shawm and the trumpet and the tambourine:
Cariola Alolo blow high and blow low:
Cariola Alolo, my heart's fair queen.

Full rivulets gushing and sparkling and rushing:
On the terrace the peacock his eyes to the sun:
By cypress and cedar what rare graces lead her,
As the doves in the boughs make melodious moan?

Through grotto, through dingle what crystals commingle
To make the pure liquid that laveth her feet:
What deities quiver and ripple the river,
Gliding ribbed sand tender kisses to greet?
To sound forth her praises and exquisite graces
Bring the shawm and the trumpet and the tambourine:
Cariola Alolo blow high and blow low:
Cariola Alolo, my heart's fair queen.

What bravest balladry wild with love's revelry,
Reeling in rapture to sonorous fall:
What buglehorns' sounding or tabors' rebounding
May herald her coming to bower and hall?
The stars stay their ringing to list to her singing,
Pausing in wonder, forgetting to shine:
Her marvellous beauty doth all their high duty;
Their brightness bedimmed in the light of her eyne.
To sound forth her praises and exquisite graces
Bring the shawm and the trumpet and the tambourine:
Cariola Alolo blow high and blow low:
Cariola Alolo, my heart's fair queen.

XIX.

A LOVE SONG.

THY love is like a summer dawn
That rises out of flowery places:
Thy love is like the veil withdrawn
From welcome light of friendly faces:

Thy love is like a gracious sleep
That over tirèd lids doth creep.

Thy love is like a springtide sun
That thaws the frost upon the meadow:
Thy love is like the faithful moon
That keeps her course through light and shadow:
Thy love is sweet, and more to me
Than sun and moon and summer be.

XX.

TO THALIA.

'TIS not the fashion of thy face
Or form that I adore;
'Tis not the semblance of a grace
Unknown to men before:

But that the fountain of thy soul
From those clear realms is drawn,
Where golden-voicèd rivers roll
Through many a blossomed lawn.

For thee a subtler being binds
Thy spirit with its beams;
The life of summer-breathing winds
And softly murmuring streams.

And I would drink of those sweet springs
That feed thy lovely eyes,
Whose dews are those that April brings,
And April sunshine dries.

XXI.

NO dawn may flush with ruddier glow
Cool breadths of morning skies:
No tender airs of springtime blow
More kindly influences.

Through groves of cypress and of pine;
By many a ferny grot,
Where crystal rillets leap and shine,
I sought, yet found her not.

But when the fiery sun had sank
Below the heathery swells
I saw her musing on a bank
Of golden asphodels.

XXII.

A SERENADE.

SWEET roses all your odours round her shed:
Blow gentle airs of night about her bed:
Hushed in repose, ye rivers glide along:
Ye nightingales breathe forth your softest song:
Watch her, ye stars, until the east unfold
And course the hills with streams of living gold,
Pale shafts of sunlight shoot across the plain,
And morning dawn upon the world again.

XXIII.

HERE be green and fertile meadows
Which the lusty sunshine loves;
Shepherds piping in the shadows,
Maidens dancing in the groves.
All you who would partake
Our joyous merrymake,
Come laugh and sing,
And dance in ring,
Whilst old Time doth gaily smile,
Resting on his scythe awhile.

XXIV.

SYLVIA.

TELL me, roses, where ye grow,
If ye know,
In the haunts where Cupid stirs
And the painted io settles
On your petals,
Ruddier lips than those of hers?

Laden bees that buzz about,
In and out,
Where the choicest honey lies,
Tell me if ye ever find,
To your mind,
Wells of sweetness like her eyes?

Cheeks of peaches on the tree,
Ere ye be
Too much kissed by loving suns,
Would your tinctured scarlets dare
Make compare
With those other paragons?

Bright laburnums, are there any
Of the many
Golden tresses on your boughs
That are any longer so
When she doth go
Where the sportive west wind blows?

Almond blossoms white as milk,
Soft as silk,
Would your blanchèd texture stand—
Though ye should be newly blown—
Comparison
With the whiteness of her hand?

Ah! no, no. Ye may have got
Part and lot
With the glory of my queen;
But your splendours hardly shine
Half so fine
When with hers they would be seen.

Nor shall sparks oth' twinkling sea
Likened be
To her bright and love-like glance.

All things fair and fit and sweet
Blend and meet
  In her beaming countenance.

Dost thou love a mouth of pearl,
And a curl
  Venus twists about her finger,
And a forehead smooth and high
Of ivory ?
  Then come hither, do not linger.

Art thou thrallèd by an eye
Of majesty ;
  Or enamoured of a fairy
Foot that speaks when tongues are dumb ?
Hither come,
  Gentle heart, and do not tarry.

Doth for thee a perfect arm
Hold a charm ?
  Though there be who have assigned it
To some marble wonder from
Greece or Rome,
  Here, believe me, thou shalt find it.

If you only saw her smile
'T would beguile
  You to thinking Love lay there,
And he whispered boldly, shyly,
Laughing slyly :
  Say you love not—if you dare !

If you might but hear her sing
It would bring
  Tears of overflowing bliss
To your eyes; and you would say
That the lay
  Sweetened every sound that is.

Voice of nightingale and lute
Must be mute,
  Though they breathe their tenderest airs,
And the raptured soul be bound
With the sound,
  If she do but warble hers.

Lovers' maidens have been known,
Many a one—
  If you listen to their praises—
Fair as angels: I aver
Beside of her
  They would lose their charms and graces.

Then her sweet and gentle ways
Who shall praise?
  Who could tell them one by one?
Poet howsoever brave
He would have
  To leave the arduous task undone.

There is something, if she show
But a bow,
  Or a blossom on which glances

Silvery sunshine of her eye
Carelessly,
  Which all other things enhances.

Once I met her in a glade
(Almost made
  A garden, for the primroses,)
When the sun shone; and again
After rain,
  Walking under leafy trees.

I have also seen her lean—
Scarcely seen—
  Where a woodland rivulet
Did its thousand eddies vex:
Rush and kex
  On its borders rankly set.

And the birds did sing so well,
'T were hard to tell:
  Sun and shadow hand in hand,
Where that happy stream did flow,
To and fro
  Danced a very saraband.

Then I met her in September,
I remember,
  On a misty autumn morn
When the fruit through foliage yellow
Glimmered mellow,
  Standing by the stooks of corn.

Some might say she is a goddess,
In her bodice
  Broidered o'er with filigree
Of leaf and bloom: if it be so
I do not know;
  But she is very fair to me.

Perhaps she is not all divine,
Since her eyne
  Sometimes fill with human tears.
Thus her pity, more than grief,
Finds relief,
  If my wisdom rightly steers.

Oh, my Lady's beauties be
Sands oth' sea!
  Sweet my song go forth to meet her:
Say my true heart only stirs
One with hers,
  Longing fervently to greet her.

XXV.

THE OFFERING.

WHAT shall I give thee? Pearls and coral treasure
  Which in the secret depths of ocean glow:
  Or roses that in greenest gardens grow:
  Or scented hawthorn blossoms for thy pleasure?
Or shall I pluck the peach with gentle seizure,
  That so its bloom a tenderer blush may know:

Or weave thee myrtle garlands for thy brow?
Ah, no; thy charms these gifts do far outmeasure;
They are but shadows of thy perfect beauty;
Thou not by them, but they by thee would gain:
For love doth languish bankrupt in thine eye,
And praises hang the head and pass thee by:—
Only thy parted sweets I bring again,
Reblossomed through a heart of loving duty.

XXVI.

MAID MARIAN.

LITTLE maid Marian, pretty maid Marian—
She was just sixteen years old last May—
Smiling maid Marian, beguiling maid Marian
Said, on the lawn as we lay:
Ah, if I were a queen of a golden fairy land,
I would have a dozen princes each to kiss my hand
Every day:
They should all kiss my hand: I would only love one:
And then, when the fighting and the feasting were all done,
I would marry him, with splendour bright and gay,
To the sound of blaring trumpets and the beat of rolling drums;
And, as he passed, the people should whisper, Here he comes;
And the guns bellow out charged with gold and sugar plums;

And a hundred bells be ringing, and all the people
singing,
Long live the king and the queen: Hurrah!
Brilliant colours flying; every maiden sighing,
For envy of my handsome prince and me,
As we bow, and we bow to them all right royally.

Little maid Marian, pretty maid Marian,
With her soft laughter and her bonny blue eyes—
Smiling maid Marian, beguiling maid Marian,
Died far away from home under other skies:
And the billows now are ringing,
And the summer flowers flinging
Their petals by the grave where she lies.

XXVII.

LOVE AND MY LADY'S EYES.

DISCONSOLATE, with torn wings furled,
Love wandered o'er the barren world:
No hope to cheer, no home to bless,
In all the arid wilderness.
In lonely grief he wept and sighed;
Then laid him down and would have died:

But you passed by where he was laid,
In native loveliness arrayed.
Clear maiden purity and grace
Shone in your look, your form, your face.
So putting by his tears and sighs,
He made his dwelling in your eyes.

And you shall be my home, he said,
With all fair gifts, imperial maid:
The kisses of your rosy mouth
Sweet as the odour-breathing south:
Deep in your pearlèd heart aglow
Bright many-blossomed Joy shall blow.'

And so, in wanton galliardise,
Love shoots his arrows from your eyes
And lightly laughs: but now and then
Those dreary times come back again:
And, with the thought of those bleak years,
He clouds your violet eyes with tears.

XXVIII.

THYME and marjory and melilot,
And all sweet things that be,
And of sweetest birds the sweetest note
That sounds from happiest tree,
For my love, and a throne of gold and pearl;
For my love, but not for me.

Cypress and yew and rosemary
And a branch of the willow tree,
And the moan of the wind and the sorrowful sigh
Of the low complaining sea
For me; and a suit of sable hue,
For my heart's despair for thee.

XXIX.

THE DREAM.

ONE night I dreamt a foolish dream
Which like a waking truth did seem.

I dreamt my lady beauteous
Stood in a garden glorious;

White blossoms woven with the rare
Bright marvel of her yellow hair.

And all things in the world did bring
Their gifts to her in offering.

The orchards, fruit: the woodlands, flowers
Culled from a thousand scented bowers.

The breezes such sweet songs did sing,
That one would die in listening.

The rillets stayed their waters fleet,
And curled in dimples at her feet.

The rivers brought her jewels, and
The ocean rolled her golden sand.

The birds sang praises and undrest
Their plumes to give her of their best.

The silken field-mouse and the mole
With beaded eyes looked from their hole.

The owlet left his nest of fur,
And stood and winked and blinked at her.

The drowsy bat came out ith' sun
To pay her due devotion.

She smiled and spoke: her gracious voice
Made every living thing rejoice.

But when on me her smile did beam,
I woke, and knew it was a dream.

XXX.

HE who hath seen those eyes of thine
No more need fear to stray,
Whose lustrous lights with tempered shine
Lead up the golden day.

Fed by the sacred fires within,
Of love that never dies,
They beam before a world of sin
Perpetual sacrifice.

XXXI.

THOUGH death should draw thee from this fair domain,
And with a little clay seal up thine eyes,
And turn to common air thy breathèd sighs,
And make thy tears but drops of April rain;

Yet shall thy sweetness be blown forth again,
And, fed with summer glories, newly rise,
And echoed music of thy lost replies
Be sung once more by birds about the plain:
For Beauty ne'er hath limned a fairer face,
Nor Truth and Love e'er lit a brighter eye;
And surely He who is the Lord of grace
Will never let such truth and beauty die;
But though they change their mortal dwelling-place,
Their shows shall still survive beneath the sky.

XXXII.

THROUGH glimmering lily-cups I push my prow
Where rose and orange-blossom take the night
With richest odours; mossy cave and bight
Fringed with a thousand dewy blooms that bow
In sleepy dreams: from leafy alleys, low
And faint, a fountain murmurs: rising white,
Vast domes and spires of marble greet the sight,
Companions of the stars that round them go
In silent wonder: from some bowery spot
The nightingale, who through the day has lain
Hushed and concealed, awakes from note to note
A thousand slumbering echoes which are fain
To bear the marvellous song from plot to plot,
Then pause enraptured for another strain.

XXXIII.

THE TEMPLE IN THE WOOD.

IN wandering through a forest dim and old,
Where mossy trees their ancient arms did twine,
I lighted on a temple crystalline,
With porticos and pillars made of gold:
From censers held by graceful nymphs were rolled
Great fumes of incense, sweetening all within:
The walls were lined with pearl and coralline:
A hundred gorgeous painted windows told
Their pictured tales: an ivory altar's flame
Flickered before a mirror; there I found
A diamond, and wrote thereon a Name,
Whereat the flame leapt, and the nymphs came round,
Singing so sweetly that, for very shame,
The nightingales were silent at the sound.

XXXIV.

THE INVITATION.

I KNOW a grassy nook
Where the brightest flowers spring,
And the sweetest birdlets sing
To the singing of a brook:

A little mossy lair,
Where the shy and blushing morn
Comes a-peeping through a thorn
Prankt with blossoms snowy fair:

And, fringed with daisies white,
Is a verdant cushion spread,
With green boughs overhead
Shutting out the sunbeams quite.

Come to my fairy nook:
Fresh as dew and glad as day
We will sing the time away
To the singing of the brook.

XXXV.

LATONA.

MIXING thy murmur with the ocean-moan,
Latona, Python-stung, why flutterest thou
About the crested waves
That break upon the beach,
Complaining to the solitary sea

Forlorn? Who, touching thy torn heart, may hush
Thy many sorrows, as the dirge-toned wind
Is hushed in inner caves
Of rocks with low-breathed sighs—
Sighs sadly sweet and sweetly sad as tears

That linger on Love's cheek: or who can bring
The shining halls of splendour back to thee;
The crystal pillared dome
Where ever ring and roll
Myriads of sailing orbs, through silvery gleams

Celestial, round Jove's head? Haply thou seest,
Looking with longing eyes beyond the strand;
Beyond the deep blue waves,
In firmament of gold,
Thy Sire dim-gazing through night-gathered tears

Who cannot hear thy plaint: or haply seest
Great Neptune rising from the tumid flood
Touching with trident swayed
Delos, whilst the Nereides
Shatter huge billows on the shaly shore.

XXXVI.

O SPIRIT of the dreary dawn,
Cold sequel to the dewless night,
Dim-brooding where grey clouds withdrawn,
Reveal long lines of pallid light—

Rise! Stretch thy heaven-broad wings and flee,
Beyond the distant mountain-land;
Beyond the darkly rolling sea
That breaks upon the sounding strand:

And bring, sweet Sun, a day of joy,
Broad, beautiful, and blue, with beams
That all the seeds of night destroy,
And light the soul with inward gleams.

XXXVII.

INSUFFICIENCY.

SWEET hedgerow flowers their graceful stalks entwine;
The light waves beat upon the sounding shore,
Whilst merry birds sing joyously and soar
The cloudless skies, clear blue and crystalline;
Yet like a thriftless gallant I must pine,
Ungracious almoner of Nature's store,
In midst of plenty wanting something more;
And, wanting that, have nothing that is mine.
With Tantalus my thirsty soul is bound:
And when I grasp the cup it passes by:
And as I listen to each dulcet sound
Within my barren ear it seems to die,
Like cheats of Time that fill an airy round,
Then perish, lost in wide Eternity.

XXXVIII.

YEARNINGS.

SPARK of immortal fire
That burns in each mortal breast;
Star of all deep desire,
Of yearnings unexpressed;
Fair angel of dumb desire
Where is thy place of rest?
When wert thou born: at even or morn?
Where dost thou die: below or on high?

Whence dost thou come; and of whom is thy birth?
Where is thy home; in heaven or earth?
Is it deep in the fiery womb of the world
Where the light-bolt is hurled and the white flame is curled
Round thy head; and thy breath is of flame?
Or on the bright spires that rise and still rise,
Struggling through snowdrift and thick cloud to kiss
The far rolling sun of the undisturbed skies—
Blue spaces of Eden-like bliss?

Ah, there in thy light let me wander and go:
Yes, there in thy kingdom of fire and snow!

XXXIX.

EUROPA.

Nuper in pratis studiosa florum, et
Debitæ Nymphis opifex coronæ,
Nocte sublustri nihil astra præter
Vidit et undas.—HORACE.

WHAT mossy vale embalmed with richest spices,
Fir-fringed and flower-sprinkled, where white orchards
Strew snow-pink petals on the soft green sward,
Strayest thou, Europa,
Beneath the glimmering stars,

Solicitous of blossoms, whilst the ocean
Sings on his shore; the nymph-devoted garland
Weaving: thyself more fair than bud and bloom—
Fearless in Agenor,
Amongst the grazing flocks?

Ah, luckless maid, if some warm God, despairing
To gain thy virtuous love, should lure thee onward
Whither the billows burst; then hurry thee
To a far isle and make thee
Perforce, unwilling bride!

Then what mad tears and wild cries unavailing:
What imprecations loud and broken sighings
Will bring these blooming meadows back to thee;
Wreathe thy fragile chaplet,
Or light the quenchèd stars?

XL.

POLYPHEMUS.

STRETCHING his shaggy bulk beneath a block
Of severed mainland shadowing the strand,
Cyclopean Polyphemus on the sand
Brooded in silence, whilst his browsing flock
Strayed unrecalled, or leapt from rock to rock,
Following the windings of the inner land:
The soft wind made a murmur low and bland:
The light wave lipped the shore with mimic shock.
'O, Galatea, shall I see thee,' cried
He, 'nevermore?' The heavens were clouded o'er.
The sea-nymphs fled. Pale oreads ran to hide.
The bent trees moaned. The sea began to roar.
The shuddering breezes wandered by and sighed.
Awakened echoes muttered: Nevermore.

XLI.

A LOVER'S COMPLAINT.

TOO happy bird that singst in yonder tree,
Why is thy note not changed to mute despair?
And thou, rejoicing spring, why dost thou bear
Thy blossoms on these meadows? Better be
Sowing thy sweets upon the barren sea,
Or on the desert sands, or anywhere,
Than mock me with the semblance of a fair
Sweet face that smiles, but never smiles on me.
My very oxen weary in the yoke:
My heifers languish; and my flocks are wild,
Wandering at will: my shepherd's pipe is broke;
And doleful life of all its peace beguiled.—
This love-sick Damon carved upon an oak,
Whilst Phillis peeped behind a bush and smiled.

XLII.

TO A DRIED-UP STREAM.

NO more within thy limpid waters fleet
The nymph delights to lave her dainty feet,
Or, mirrored there,
To gaze upon a form which might have been
The brightest of a Grecian sculptor's dream,
And still more fair.

Henceforth Diana in her godlike grace,
And all her wood-nymphs, heated in the chase,
Thy cool waves miss:

Plump arm, round cheek, and snowy bosom bare
Have sought their noontide shelter otherwhere,
Forsaking this.

Old Pan, who oft would lay aside his crook,
Finding beside thee some secluded nook,
And pipe all day,
No more upon thy banks is ever heard
(The trembling leaves with music lightly stirred),
Piping away.

At golden sunset or at cool star-dawn
The shepherd sits no more upon the lawn
Telling his tale
Of love to her who from the heights above
With timid step and smile was wont to rove
Adown the vale.

The alder that thy ripples used to stir,
Waking to flight the flashing kingfisher
Which dwelt therein,
Has folded up his yellow leaves and sere,
And knows no more that summer still is here,
Fresh, fair and green.

The weeping willow, all its tears foregone,
Now drops its flaccid leaflets one by one
To fade and rot:
The ferns that fringed thy mossy caves and grots
Hang withered plumes: thy blue forget-me-nots
Are all forgot.

For singing of the nightingale and thrush
The loud cicala screams from every bush
With harsh, dry throat:
The flowers that broidered all thy grassy brink,
And bowed themselves thy sparkling spray to drink,
Are dead of drought.

Where once the dashing waters tumbled down
A lizard basks upon a smooth white stone,
Then slips beneath:
A butterfly is flutt'ring where there was
A little dimple on thy face of glass
Stirred by a breath.

The fish that loved to haunt thy shadowy brim,
And in thy broad, brown pools to lie and swim,
Has vanished now:
The gauze-winged dragon-fly has left alone
The bubbling shallows which he knew, and gone
Where others flow.

The wind that wandered lightly up and down
Thy banks with joy now makes his gentle moan
And inly grieves;
And, for the sweets he once about thee blew,
Has brought, to hide thy nakedness, a few
Of last year's leaves.

Of all thy waterweeds and cresses green,
And bristling rushes, now not one is seen
To wave or blow:

Only the oak wherein the small birds sing
Hath made to thee the single offering
Of one dry bough.

Those liquid babblings, thy own sylvan hymn,
Dying within the dewy woodland dim,
Are past and gone;
And scarcely memory in her tenderest moods
Recalls a note, to wake these solitudes,
Of thy rare tone.

Monte Luco, Spoleto, July 1867.

XLIII.

A SONG OF ACIS TO GALATEA.

THOU dost dispraise the very flowers of spring,
For they do make their morning of thine eyes:
Fair Venus counts thy beauty for a prize;
And Love for love of thee doth droop his wing:
For thee white fountains fall and fleet winds sing:
For thee hot summer wastes himself in sighs:
Hushed nightingales wait on thy wished replies;
And all the world to thee its joy doth bring:
Thou art more lovely than the light that fills
The dewy-tender gaze of dying day
When every star with Galatea thrills.
Thus, on Sicilian slopes, midst olives grey,
Warm Acis sang, and the reverberate hills
Reworded the sweet music of his lay.

XLIV.

A LAMENT.

SHEPHERD maidens who are wont
To dip in Arethusa's font,
Leave your sports beside the brink
Where your bleating flocks do drink;
Let your sorrowing footsteps be
Underneath the cypress tree,
Ever making doleful moan
For what cruel death hath done.

Woe is me! ah, what availeth
Mourning when the spirit faileth?
Grace and beauty, wealth and pleasure,
Surely take at last this measure;
Lands of faery; finest eyes,
Wither at a touch likewise:
Yet refrain not sigh or moan:
Death ne'er took so true a one.

XLV.

THE SEA-KING'S WOOING.

I HAVE a gallant ship and trim
As ever did on ocean swim,
All carved of whitest ivory,
With silken sails full fair to see.

Its decks are laid with pearl and ore,
And jewels from the deep sea's floor;
With forty sailors brave and bold,
To man its masts of beaten gold.

And when the gentle breezes blow
The mermaids sport about the prow;
And tossing dolphins spout and play,
Companions of our sparkling way.

So swift we sail sometimes we seem
To fly beneath the pale moon's beam,
As in the clear and starry night
The fiery waves break into light.

Thus mid wide seas of bursting foam
We always find a glorious home:
Then come with me across the sea,
And you the rover's bride shall be.

Your bed of velvet shall be made
With golden tassels round your head;
And noble maidens at your call
Shall hold you mistress of them all.

In gorgeous lands of palm and spice,
Beneath the blue of summer skies,
Where murmuring waves about us break,
Sometimes our pastime we will take;

And hear the birds with painted wing
The marvel of your beauty sing,

Whilst fragrant winds around us rove
From many a blossomed myrtle grove.

Thus journeying ever we shall find
Still better than we leave behind:
Then come with me across the sea,
And you the rover's bride shall be.

XLVI.

THE RIVER.

HURRAH for the river! the bright young river
That bursts from its rocky bed
Where the harebells blow and the violets grow
And the purple heath is spread:
Forcing its way in twinkling spray
Between the yellow-green stones;
Shouting its song, as it dances along,
In a thousand gurgling tones.

Ah well for the river! the clear, broad river,
That laves its meadowy brim:
The white cloud sleeps in its pale blue deeps
Where the water-lilies swim.
By upland and down; by tower and town;
By farm and forest and ley,
As the boatmen sing and the village bells ring,
It lapses calmly away.

O woe for the river! the bleak, dark river,
That crawls on its muddy course
By tree-forks bare, where the cold moist air
Seems filled with a heavy curse.
Through the city slime of anguish and crime
It flows, and its turbid flood,
As it rolls and moans o'er its cold hard stones,
Is stained with human blood.

XLVII.

SUMMER AND WINTER.

WHEN cold winds blow, and midnight stars are born,
And dead leaves fly, and ways are filled with mire,
'Tis pleasant, sitting by the wintry fire,
To see within it fields of waving corn;
Mountains and groves and gorges water-worn;
White villages with many a glistening spire:
Or, in a dear remembrance, to respire
The vanished fragrance of some autumn morn.
'Tis pleasant, sitting under summer trees
Clothed in the green robes of their leafy pride,
To hear the murmuring of brook and breeze,
And muse of winter and its warm fireside.
Thus winter reaps what summer hours have sown,
And summer brighter grows for winters gone.

XLVIII.

THE moon rose up at nightfall,
And called to her starry quire,
And led them up the wide heaven
On wings of silvery fire.

She bade them begin their music,
And it swelled through the halls of night:
Ten thousand seraph-voices
Raining in drops of light,

Down to the dim world under;
On field and forest and fen;
With dew on the hanging flowers;
With sleep on the homes of men.

The mother who lulled her baby,
Hushed on the couch of her breast,
Bowed in as soft a slumber,
And sank to as sweet a rest.

The head of the weary toiler,
Laid down on his pillow in pain,
Was soothed by that aery chorus
To a childhood's dream again.

The sick and the suffering wakeful
On pallets of anguish and woe,
Were charmed of their hot heart's fever
By the melody soft and low

The strain of the poet whose sorrow
Still rang through the verses he sung,
Drowned by a lordlier music,
Died on his faltering tongue.

The chambers of night and darkness
Gave back their notes to the sky,
Floating for ever and ever
Round the throne of the Lord on high.

And the angels in bliss and glory
Echoed their rapturous song,
As the white moon marshalled them onwards,
Singing, a glittering throng,

Till she folded them, like a shepherd,
Down by the western brim,
At the first faint peep of daylight,
And the sky-lark's morning hymn.

XLIX.

THE ANGEL LULLABY.

THE mother has laid her infant
To sleep in his little room,
And she sits by the fireside thinking
Of the sunny days to come.

She hears a murmuring and singing;
A lisping and whispering low,
Soft as the voice of the woodland
When the summer breezes blow.

She goes to the little chamber;
  She peeps through the door ajar:
Round her baby boy is gleaming
  The glory of moon and star.

An angel is bending above him,
  Snow-white with glistering wings;
And the infant smiles in his slumber,
  As the angel whispers and sings.

L.

DOWN the sparkling stream together
  We floated side by side
In the still, unclouded weather,
  In Life's fresh morningtide;

By banks of purple clover,
  By knolls of melilot;
To the cry of the moorland plover,
  And the throstle's gurgling note.

The birches and willows dropt on us
  The balm of a holy dew:
The bliss of the blest was upon us
  As the low breeze about us blew:

Till the grey-green sea was around us,
  The clear blue sky above,
And the blossoming seasons unbound us
  To think and to weep and to love.

Away on the wide, wide ocean,
When some unpropitious tide,
With an envious counter-motion,
Swept my shallop from her side.

She wrung her hands in sorrow:
My eyes were blinded with tears.
Far out of sight on the morrow
Were the friends of long, sweet years.

Now I hear the breakers rave on
The shore where I wander free.
At last I have found my haven:
But she—oh, where is she?

LI.

WITH common look and tone we sat
And talked of book and flower;
No telegraphic symbol that
Told of one passionate hour.

My life lay torpid in my heart:
My blood beat thick and slow;
But all my being with a start
Woke when you rose to go.

As you held my hand beside the door
I half forgot my tears:
That lingering touch brought back once mo
The love of long past years.

LII.

TOUCH once more the silver string
Low and soft; he will not wake:
Sing the song I used to sing;
Bow the flowers with music; take
All the solemn winds with moan:
For my love is gone, is gone.

Shiver o'er him, lying low,
Silv'ry birch and sallow willow;
Daisies white above him grow,
Clustered on his cold earth-pillow,
Folded round in moonless night;
Folded from all smiles and light.

Cease, oh cease, the tender strain:
Sweeter music comes to bless
My spirit in its bitter pain,
Faint with watch and weariness:
Let me lie upon your breast;
Close my eyes in dreamless rest.

LIII.

IMOGENE OF HEATHERLOW.

THICK snow-flakes falling through the dark
Were muffling pasture-field and park.

The angry sun had slashed the night
With crimson gash, in fell despite.

The stunted poplars by the heath
Glared o'er the waste like wraiths of death.

The spectre elms beneath the snow
Writhed and groaned as if in woe.

The grusome wind went round about,
And shook the doors in dismal rout.

Within the house the children sat:
Bright flames were flapping in the grate.

O, mother sing the song you know,
Of Imogene of Heatherlow:

And we will sing our part between:
'Fair befall sweet Imogene.'

She took the youngest on her knee,
And sang subdued and mournfully:

Within a castle grey and old
There dwelt an ancient baron bold.

'Fair fall sweet Imogene.'

And with him lived his daughter fair,
With sapphire eyes and golden hair.

'For she was beauty's queen.'

Fierce and passionate was he:
But gentle, good and kind was she.

'Fair fall sweet Imogene.'

She had a lover warm and true ;
The squire of Holm, the brave Sir Hugh.

'For she was beauty's queen.'

Her father swore, till she was dead,
With him she never should be wed.

'Fair fall sweet Imogene.'

He pledged her to a foreign lord :
Astolfo famed with lance and sword.

'For she was beauty's queen.'

The brave Sir Hugh for distant lands
Set forth, to fight with paynim bands.

'Fair fall sweet Imogene.'

But she was sad, and day by day,
Like snow in April, fell away.

'For she was beauty's queen.'

One night she dreamt upon her bed
The good Sir Hugh stood by and said :

'Fair fall sweet Imogene.'

Whene'er thy wedding day shall be,
Be sure that I shall be with thee.

'For she was beauty's queen.'

She rose and took her silk and gold,
And vair and velvet, many a fold.

'Fair fall sweet Imogene.'

Right royally the broidery grew:
No rest her busy needle knew.

'For she was beauty's queen.'

And as she worked she felt no pain:
Her cheeks bloomed into health again.

'Fair fall sweet Imogene.'

One sunny day at matin hour
Astolfo came unto her bower.

'For she was beauty's queen.'

O lady sweet, O lady fair!
What is it you are making there?

'Fair fall sweet Imogene.'

The lady smiled and raised her head:
I make my wedding robe, she said.

'For she was beauty's queen.'

He came again one day at noon:
What is it makes my lady boon?

'Fair fall sweet Imogene.'

I make my shoes of silk, she said,
To wear the day that I shall wed.

'For she was beauty's queen.'

He came once more at fall of eve:
What is the garland that you weave?

'Fair fall sweet Imogene.'

I weave a wreath of blossoms gay
To crown me on my marriage day.

'For she was beauty's queen.'

The morning rose o'er field and bower;
The little birds sang round the tower.

'Fair fall sweet Imogene.'

The drums were beat, the bells were rung;
To praise the bride all found a tongue.

'For she was beauty's queen.'

Astolfo came at break of day,
With knight and squire in brave array.

'Fair fall sweet Imogene.'

Beneath her bower he wound his horn:
Awake! this is our marriage morn.

'For she was beauty's queen.'

He turned and saw her serving maid:
Your lady slumbers long, he said.

'Fair fall sweet Imogene.'

Go tap upon her chamber door,
And bid her hasten from her bower.

'For she was beauty's queen.'

The maid went in: My lady dear,
The bridegroom waits, the priest is here.

'Fair fall sweet Imogene.'

She lay in marriage garments dress'd:
Her hands were crossed upon her breast.

'For she was beauty's queen.'

So sweet a smile upon her face,
It seemed as though she slept a space.

'Fair fall sweet Imogene.'

The maiden went to where she lay:
Her soul from earth had passed away.

'For she was beauty's queen.'

The priest came with his book and read
Some holy prayers beside her bed.

'Fair fall sweet Imogene.'

But she lay still, and smiled and slept,
Whilst all the people round her wept.

'For she was beauty's queen.'

LIV.

DIRGE.

HEARSÈD plumes and funeral shows
Bring her life to mournful close.
Sable yew and cypress strew
Softly, lightly on her;
And white snowdrops, one or two,
Ere the cold earth own her.

Toll the bell and muffled go;
Folded all in grief your faces.
She was pure as mountain snow
Which the gloomy rock enchases:
Stainless as the morning dew;
Loving tender, kind and true.

LV.

BESIDE a stream one summer afternoon
I lay, where shifting shadows streaked the floor
Of soft green grass; the wind with gentle roar
Sighing amongst the leaves a pensive tune;
When Sleep came softly by—that blessèd boon
Of weary souls—and in his arms he bore
Her whom I loved and now I mourn. She wore
A snowy robe; and, clearer than the moon,
Her pale face shone: her lips of tender red
A little smiled: around her head there was
A ring of glory: on her peaceful breast
Her hands were crossed in still repose. Then as
He bore her by: Wouldst thou desire, he said,
With sighs and tears to break so sweet a rest?

LVI.

DOWN by the river where the black mills turn for ever,
By the yellow rolling river where the breezes lightly blow;
There by the river where the sunbeams dance and quiver,

Where oranges and lemons and tall oleanders grow,
We wandered hand in hand long ago.

Down by the river the willow waves for ever,
And the merry miller's laughter is echoing as before:
All along the river the golden wavelets shiver,
And the washing-women gossip on the shore:
But we wander there together nevermore.

LVII.

WE sat by the side of the fire:
She laid her hand on my knee:
But a wide and fathomless ocean
Lay between her and me.

So near, and yet so distant!
I could scarcely say, It is well,
As I thought of our friendly years,
And muttered a heart's farewell.

Farewell! yet she spoke so lightly:
I cannot tell what she said;
For her voice was strange and dreamlike
As the voice of the long-lost dead.

LVIII.

THE flutes breathed airs harmonious;
Low rang the deep bassoon:
But what was melody to us?
Our hearts were out of tune.

With trifling talk we would beguile
Our griefs and put them by:
We tried to smile; but such a smile
Had better been a sigh.

The bell was rung, the paddles smote
The waves that beat the shore;
And then, upon the deep afloat,
The last farewell was o'er.

Soon on the ocean's utmost rim
A faint blue ridge was seen;
The insubstantial vision dim
Of that which once had been.

LIX.

DOWN the desolate street and silent
I creep to the rusty door
Which my love in the balmy twilights
Will open, ah, nevermore.

I look through the grimy window
Into her little room
Where she, or her lamps bright shining,
Will nevermore star the gloom.

The books are faded; the carpet
Is fusty and dusty and grim;
The table, the chairs and the mirror
Are mouldy and smutty and dim.

What visions of youth's sweet season
  Revolve in my mazy head,
As I turn from the dreary picture
  To her cherished garden-bed!

It was here, one springtide morning,
  When the honey-bee buzzed in the limes,
She gave me a rose from that briar,
  And I kissed it a thousand times.

Now, blanched and withered and blasted,
  The petals are scattered around:
Faded and mouldering, the loved one
  Lies dead in the cold, cold ground.

LX.

BY night, when the moon was shining
  I went to my true-love's tomb,
And I sat on the grey stone waiting
  To see if she would come.

Ah, me! and I went long backwards
  Through the dreamy fields of the Past:
My soul with tears was bursting,
  And my heart was beating fast.

The voice of the robin was silent;
  The song of the thrush was mute;
But a murmur from the fir trees
  Breathed round me like a flute.

I felt her warm breath on me,
Rich in its smiles and sighs:
I turned and looked with wonder
Into my true-love's eyes.

LXI.

THE LOVE-LORN KING.

IN days of old there lived a widowed king
Who loved a maiden very fair to see,
But of a low degree:
And yet he loved her more than aught beside.

His barons and his courtiers long time tried
To quench his doting passion; but in vain;
For still it grew amain,
Increasing day by day; until, at last,

She died. But not his love: though life was past
That still continued: so he caused that she
With spice embalmed should be,
And dressed in gorgeous robes of silk and fur.

And every day the king did go to her,
And kissed her sadly, crying in this wise:
O maiden whose sweet eyes
Were all my life, why is their clear light fled?

Why are those lilies and those roses dead
Which were my springtime and my summer too?
Alas, that death should do
His work on thee and leave me here to mourn!

Now when the king his sorrow long had borne,
Leaving his rule and rank without a thought,
One of his courtiers sought
An ancient sage who dwelt within a grove,

And told him of the king, and how his love
Had all unkinged him. Then the sage with book
And magic rite did look
Into the wormy kingdom of the dead.

Go back, and ope the maiden's mouth, he said,
And you shall find beneath her tongue a ring:
Take it; and so the king,
When this is done, shall be restored again.

The courtier went and took the ring; and when
The king looked on her whom he loved so late
His love was changed to hate;
So that they took the maid and buried her.

But all his love that moment did transfer
To him who held the ring; until, one day,
In passing where there lay
A marshy swamp, he threw away the thing.

Now after many days it chanced the king,
Hunting when June was shining bright and hot,
Came to that very spot;
And paused to rest, sitting upon a stone.

But when he rose refreshed and would have gone,
It seemed as though the place were far more fair
And had a sweeter air
Than fabled regions of enchanted ground.

Thither he came from time to time and found
Strange pleasure by the marshy pools, and lay
Upon the sward all day,
Rapt in a vague delight beyond compare.

So that he bid his builders raise him there
A lordly marble palace, vast and grand,
The wonder of the land:
And soon a busy city grew beside.

Loaded with years at length the monarch died:
But still the city flourished; and, 'tis said,
That he who there should wed
Will never through his life that wedding rue;
And she who finds a spouse there finds him true.

LXII.

THE KING'S DAUGHTER.

THE king sat enthroned in the palace hall, the courtiers standing around;
In robes of purple and ermine he sat, with gold and with jewels crowned:
His passionate eyes were ablaze with wrath; in anger he fiercely frowned.

'What caitiff has stolen my daughter?' he cried in thunder-accents, 'I vow
'And swear by the heaven above us bowed and the hell that yawns below,
'Till this good steel blade shall have drunk his blood no rest or quiet to know.'

In silent amaze the courtiers stood: not a word did
his barons speak
As each furious warrior grasped his sword and went
out the felon to seek:
To traverse the land from end to end, by ford and
valley and creek.

But the king, like a lion caged, stalked up and down
the ringing hall,
With lips compressed, with lowering brows, pacing
from wall to wall:
And Anger and Grief were lords of the land from
morn to evenfall.

With lowering brows and with lips compressed, with
a heart borne down with care,
He mourned till anguish had furrowed his face and
sprinkled with grey his hair;
Till the fever of passion had died and left a frozen
and blank despair.

Then a minstrel came to the city who a great renown
did gain
For the power that lived in his wondrous skill to
soothe all sorrow and pain:
To waken the weary in suffering to life and to joy
again.

They brought him before the moody king as he sat
on his glittering throne.
The singer he smote his harp and thence drew many
a warbling tone;
And sometimes it seemed to be wild with delight,
then sank to a sorrowful moan.

All voices e'er heard beneath the sky in his carol seemed to meet:
The song of the thrush, the nightingale and the robin sad and sweet;
The rippling brook and the roaring flood, and the stormy cataract's beat.

The wild bee's low, slow lullaby, the chirk of the grasshopper,
The tender undertone of the wind in a forest of birch and fir,
When it dies away on the lisping leaves that scarcely seem to stir;

Sinking away into whisperings of a heaven of spirit-song;
Rising in wreaths of raptured sounds, bearing each soul along,
Upwards, until it seemed to float the wondering stars among.

Their innermost hearts were thrilled and filled with the shrilling melody;
Trembling in breathless amazement when the music rose clear and high;
Drinking each note as it died away in realms of the uttermost sky.

Then the king with a tear upon his cheek and a smile in his eye rose up.
Through the dreary gloom of his soul was struck a sudden gleam of hope.
With his own right hand he offered the bard a wine-filled golden cup.

'My kingdom, the half of my kingdom,' he cried, 'to this lord of music and song.
'Surely to him who has wakened my life my gratefullest gifts belong.
'Ask now, and whatever you ask you shall have: you have cancelled my grief and wrong.'

Then the minstrel bent low a loyal knee, as his harp beside him lay,
Bowing his head before the crown and the old head growing gray:
'Your pardon, my royal father, I crave; for I stole your daughter away.'

LXIII.

SIR RODOLPH.

TWILIGHT dews are softly falling
Over grove and fallow gray;
Gentle breezes lightly blowing
Sing the dirge of dying day.

Rodolph seeks the fair Emilia,
Sitting in her bower alone;
Clasps her fondly to his bosom,
And their two hearts beat as one.

'Dearest, will you love me truly?'
'Dearest, how can I forget?'
'Life without thee is but sorrow.'
'And thy absence but regret.'

Then he mounts his steed and slowly
Rides away as one forlorn.
Round him blow the salt sea breezes
Fed with foam the morrow morn.

Struggling on the stormy ocean;
Tossed beneath tempestuous skies;
Came a band of roving pirates;
Took the vessel for a prize.

Bore him to a distant country;
Limb to limb with fetters bound;
Made him slave to ceaseless labour,
Tilling day by day the ground.

Five and twenty years they kept him
Toiling still, until his hair
Was whitened, and his griefs had bowed him
Down with age and wasting care.

So when life was almost failing;
(Long had failed his palsied hand;)
Gained with joy his long-lost freedom,
Straight he sought his native land.

Journeying long in guise of pilgrim,
Scrip and staff and gown of green,
At length he reached his native country,
Where his heart so long had been.

Learned his lady love had wedded
With an earl who lived thereby;
Then he felt his spirit fail him,
And his heart bleed inwardly.

By her castle gate a cottage
With a little garden stood:
Here the sad and world-worn pilgrim
Made, content, his last abode.

So his lady sometimes passing
Smiled upon him: sometimes came,
Sat beside his hearth and cheered him:
But he never told his name.

Spring came round and summer blossomed,
Autumn browned the forest pride;
But ere wintry winds had reft it,
Slowly sickening he died.

Then his lady came and standing
By his couch with pitying ruth,
Saw that cruel death had brought her
The dear lover of her youth.

LXIV.

THE CASTLE ON THE ISLAND.

THERE lies amidst a gloomy lake
An island spread with tangled brake,
Brambles and thistles:
A broken castle donjon stands
Thereon which all the isle commands,
And lower down upon the sands
A convent nestles.

No fisherman beside that isle
Leans on his oar to rest awhile;
And when he passes
He signs himself and hastens by,
As if he heard some fearful cry
Borne by the breezes as they die
Amongst the grasses.

For there, 'tis whispered, on a time,
Was wrought a dark and deadly crime
To make one shudder;
And there are heard mysterious moans,
And whispers mixed with sobs and groans,
And blood yet lies upon the stones
Of a foul murder.

And thus the direful story goes,
That once beside that tower there rose
A lordly castle,
And in it dwelt a noble race
Which had been master of the place
Since winds upon the water's face
Would roam and whistle.

And of that race there was a youth
As gallant and as brave, in sooth,
As e'er did carry
A lance in rest—true nobleman,
Who loved, in spite of curse and ban,
The daughter of a fisherman,
And her would marry.

But, threatened by the castle's lord,
Her parents in the convent's ward
Were fain to place her.
Yet though you shut from face of day
Love's object, Love will find a way
To reach it soon or late, they say:
He there did trace her.

At night her lover climbed the wall
In spite of abbess, nuns and all,
The danger scorning.
For weeks and months this may have been
Ere he a bleeding corpse was seen,
Stretched by the wall, upon the green,
One summer's morning.

The fishermaiden all day sighed,
And through the night she wept and cried,
Bathing her pillow;
And in the convent's ground, 'tis said,
A tiny grave was shortly made
Wherein a little babe was laid
Beside a willow.

And then she broke the convent's bound,
And wandered all the island round,
Wailing her lover;
And she would dress a doll of wood,
And think to feed it with her food:
Alas! she mourned life's highest good:
Her peace was over.

Now in the churchyard, near a cross
Half overgrown with grass and moss,
She rests in quiet.
The castle's lord is dead and gone:
The walls are falling stone by stone:
Only the ivy there doth moan
When winds run riot.

LXV.

THE SPECTRE MAID.

ON wood and hill the bright moon shone,
And sparkled on the lake;
The rippling waves amongst the sedge,
Borne gently round the pebbly edge,
A softened roar did make.

A youth came down the mountain path,
And whistled o'er the water;
And soon he saw a little boat
Rowed by a maid in white: he thought
It was the ferryman's daughter.

But as she neared the shore he stood
As one in blank amaze,
For she was fair as angels seem
To ravished poets when they dream
Beneath Arcadian bays.

And scarcely knowing what he did,
He stept into the boat.
She took the oars, and then began
To sing as sweetly as a swan
That breathes his dying note.

The lake was rippled at the sound,
Thrilled to its inmost bay,
As round and round the music went
Until within the firmament
It seemed to die away.

She laid the oars aside and came
To where he sat entranced,
And kissed his eyes and cheeks and lips,
Till, beating to his finger tips,
His pulses throbbed and danced.

And yet he felt her breath was cold;
Her cheeks were chill as fair:
The light that sparkled in her eyes
Gleamed like the moon on peaks of ice:
Cold as a wintry star.

Reclining on his breast she laid
The marvel of her brow.
He heard low voices whisper—heard
The crisping ripples lightly stirred
About the moving prow.

Forebodings dire oppressed his heart:
The moon behind a hill

Sank suddenly: a shuddering blast
Came down: she clasped him firm and fast:
The boat began to fill.

Ah! then he knew the Spectre Maid
Had grasped him in her toils.
In vain he struggles, writhes and cries:
The thunder booms, the lightning flies,
The water seethes and boils.

The tempest down the mountain side
Rolls with an angry roar.
One moment and the boat is seen
Through tossing surf to reel and spin,
And then is seen no more.

LXVI.

A SINGLE star in the rosy sky:
The convent bell is ringing:
Hark! the merry sea-nymphs cry,
The white spray lightly flinging:
See it hang on their locks,
As they dance o'er the rocks,
Singing so airily!

Hist! their music dies away
Into a low lullaby
Faintly floating o'er the sea:
Lullaby, sweet lullaby:
Come soft slumber dreamily:
Lulla, lulla, lullaby!

LXVII.

THE TROUBADOUR.

THROUGH sunny lands of vine and olive
With joyous heart I wandered long,
And with my harp's inspiring music
Cheered the way with many a song.

And thus I reached a lordly city
Sparkling high with domes and spires:
O'er silver streams the lofty palm trees
Waved amidst the pale star-fires:

Sat beside a marble fountain:
Struck my harp in vagrant mood,
When lightly came a lovely maiden
Gliding from the glistening flood.

Pale her face and white her raiment:
Eyes that looked me through and through:
Waving locks of gold unbraided,
Wet with shining drops of dew.

And we sang our songs together
Till the rising of the morn:
Then she left me sitting lonely,
Sad at heart and all forlorn.

Night and day beside that fountain
All my tears are shed in vain;
Nevermore that lovely vision
Comes to visit me again.

LXVIII.

THE grey old castle is gleaming,
Steeped in the evening glow;
Its golden reflection trembles
And flames in the flood below.

The vineyards so tranquilly lying,
The sky and the air and the sun,
In their peace give a voice to the silence;
Like a hymn for the day that is done.

Sweet memories waken within me
The spirits of long-past years,
And fill the blue sky that is over,
And the earth with their smiles and tears:

And bring back again the fresh morning
When we stood on this crumbling wall,
She and I in our joy together;
And the springtide was over all.

And still in the bed of the river
The face of the loved one I see;
And the sound of her ringing laughter
Comes echoing back to me.

And never through all the ages
Whilst the torrent of Time rolls on
Will the form of those features vanish,
Or their beauty be utterly gone.

And never whilst turns and changes
This world through its joy and pain,
Will the sound of those lingering accents
Be dumb in my heart again.

LXIX.

THE VOICES OF THE PAST.

I HEAR them when the dews of night are falling;
I hear them when the winds of morn are still;
And when the greening fields and woodlands thrill
With spring's first life at violet-time, forestalling
Impatient summer-dawn, I hear them calling.
No bird his tender orison can trill
In copse or dingle, but their echoes fill
My soul with olden melodies enthralling.
And sometimes, when the midnight winter rain
Beats on my casement and the raging blast
Rides on the tempest rushing loud and fast,
I murmur, as their music wanders past
Like joys remembered through long years of pain,
Oh, come again, sweet voices come again.

LXX.

INCAPACITY.

OF all the flowers that bloomed in bygone years
In summer fields, we gather only one:
The happiest moments we have ever known
Are but a streak of light on seas of tears:

The precious sounds that fed our greedy ears
  Leave but uncertain echoes of their tone:
  The crownèd hours, lit by clear suns that shone,
  Even within us, from celestial spheres,
In faintest radiance scarcely may abide:
  The gilded glories of the Past are all
  But vanished blossoms which last season died—
In vain their shadows from the grave we call.
  O vast Desires, why were ye made so wide:
  Or why, O narrow Soul, art thou so small?

LXXI.

A REQUIEM.

PEACEFULLY she lies at rest;
  Like a blossom, some might say,
  Blown from apple trees in May:
Hushed the heavings of her breast.

Fairer wonders could not be:
  Pearly shapes so delicate,
  They could hardly find a mate
In the marvels of the sea.

Little minion-mouthèd Loves
  Stand aghast at Death's eclipse—
  Closing eyes and blanching lips—
Blunted arrows, drooping doves.

See her hand, so small a one,
  Made to fit a finer clasp
  Than we mortals ever grasp,
In the land where she is gone:

Crooked tresses falling over;
Nets to take us with surprises
More than Love's sweet name comprises,
Or his tenderest kisses cover.

Look, the faint and subtle light
Lingers lovingly about her:
No, it cannot do without her:
All its day would change to night.

Let the lily blossom by her,
And the bended rose's bloom
Lean and wave: shut up the tomb:
Winter rains must not come nigh her.

Stay awhile your tears and sighs;
Then above her sable hearse
Character this single verse:
Love is dead, and here he lies.

LXXII.

MEMORY'S PORTRAITURE.

WHEN that my eye doth fix upon those parts
Which Beauty's majesty once stamped with praise,
And reads the gentleness so learned in ways
To find an arrow road to loving hearts:
When I recall the grace that graced all arts,
With words whose music dulled the sweetest lays,
I reap the harvest of my antique days,
And vanished glory to new glory starts.

But when I think how Time hath all removed
With leaden touch and stilled the silvery tongue,
Then is my heavy chance more weighty proved,
And Life's dark day with sable clouds is hung;
Seeing that all is gone of what I loved
Save one sweet memory and this little song.

LXXIII.

NIGHT AND MORNING.

THE low wind moans above each mossy mound:
Hark! through the hollow vale the death-bell sound:
Harsh nightbirds shriek: the watch-dog bays afar:
Whilst folded vapours veil each friendly star:
Clothed in deep darkness every wood and hill:
On sleeping flowers the chilly dews distil:
The lonely pilgrim sighs and fondly turns
To where a taper dimly, faintly burns;
Thinks of his distant home and native groves,
Breathing a fervent prayer for those he loves.

But soon, where crags and gloomy peaks arise,
A feeble ray is seen to tinge the skies:
The matin bell sounds o'er the misty plain:
The early shepherd wakes his flocks again:
The birds begin to sing their morning hymn:
The cheerful sun looks o'er the mountain's brim:
Then rolls the clouds of darkness quite away,
And bursts to splendour of the perfect day.

LXXIV.

OUT OF THE WINDOW.

I LOOKED out of the window and into the street:
On the pavement the heavy rain spattered and beat.

Long tap-roots of light, like the stars on a river,
Deep down in the ground seemed to sparkle and quiver.

I saw three white figures, like ghosts from the tomb,
By archway and portico steal through the gloom.

They glided along as if under a spell,
Nor heeded the pitiless rain as it fell.

Through light and through shadow they came and they went,
Like something and nothing mysteriously blent.

And now they seemed beautiful, graceful and tall;
And now they seemed short, with no beauty at all.

The light of the lamps, as it flashed on their faces,
Now showed me three Furies, now gleamed on three Graces.

One moment I knew those gold locks on the head
Of the middle one; then they seemed serpents instead.

'Twixt lightning and sunshine rayed out the strange
light
That beamed in the eye of the one on the right.

And deep at the core of my heart I was stirr'd,
With a wild throbbing flame, by the gait of the third.

But the figures passed on, never looking around,
Nor lifted their garments that trailed on the ground:

By archway and portico where the rain beat,
Till they vanished away in the gloom of the street.

LXXV.

SLOW tolls the bell: the snow is falling fast:
The furious storm rides on the roaring blast:
The streams are ice: no moon or star appears:
Pale mortals clothe themselves in trembling fears:
Lost in the forest perjured spirits wail:
And frenzied ghosts go shrieking through the vale.

LXXVI.

ON THE GRAVE.

POPLARS dim against the gray;
Silver lines that streak the west;
Stars that kiss the waning day;
Winds that hush it to its rest:
Stars that light me to thy tomb;
Winds that wail thy hapless doom:

Stars and winds and poplars dim,
Silver gleams that bar the west,
Fade before me as I dream
On the grass where thou dost rest:
Only thy sweet light I see,
In my spirit lighting me.

LXXVII.

THE TROLLS.

THE moon through the sky is gliding
Adown to her silvery rest;
The birds all silently cradled,
Asleep in each mossy nest.

The traveller, breathing enchanted
The night-balm soothing and still,
Is stayed by an uproar that greets him,
As he passes beside the hill:

A blazing and blowing and glowing,
A hustle and bustle and burr,
A clattering and battering and banging,
A humming and drumming and whirr.

'Tis the trolls who are forging and welding
In the heart of the hollow mound:
Beating their anvils and singing
Busily under the ground.

LXXVIII.

THE THREE WOOERS.

THREE brothers came wooing a maiden fair,
From over the hills, in the spring of the year.

She smiled on them all, and she made them a feast:
I will marry the suitor who loves me the best.

The eldest was first: I prithee be mine:
I will gift thee with lands and with jewels so fine.

The second spoke lower: Be mine, an' thou will,
I will love thee for ever and shield thee from ill.

The youngest came last. He was fair to behold:
His eyes were of azure; his hair was of gold:

Thy happiness, maid, is more worthy than mine:
Choose him to whom thou dost most incline.

Then she gave her hand to the youngest of three:
Through life and to death I will journey with thee.

LXXIX.

SIWARD.

SIWARD, warrior brave and bold,
Breathing hardly on his bed,
Feeling now Death's finger cold
Clutch his heart-strings, gasping, said:

Bring my armour, helm and spear;
Put them on me ere I die.
Death with these I do not fear:
Emblems still of victory.

So they brought him helm and spear,
Clad him in his dinted mail,
In his eye the warfire clear;
And his visage did not quail.

Lords and ladies watching round
Saw the warfire slowly fade:
Watched, but uttered not a sound,
As he drooped and fell back, dead.

LXXX.

THE MINSTREL.

A MINSTREL sat under a jasamine bower,
With lords and with ladies around;
And he struck the wild strings of his zithern with power,
And exultingly sang to the sound.

His carol was echoed from tower and hill,
Ere it died on the waves of the river:
But down in the hearts of those listeners still
It will roll on for ever and ever.

The zithern dropt down from his hands as he sang;
The light of his eyes became dim:
Nevermore from the rocks or the river-bank rang
The sound of that glorious hymn.

LXXXI.

THE TREASURE-TROVE.

A KING rode forth a hunting
With hounds and horses gay;
And I trow that many a gallant buck
Did rue the sport that day.

But as he roamed the greenwood
His eyes could scarcely keep
Themselves awake for heaviness,
Until that he should sleep.

So he dismounted from his steed,
And, where a brook did run,
On the lap of his good courtier
His weary head laid down.

Then as he lay a sleeping
A wondrous sight was seen:
A golden serpent lightly crept
From his open lips between.

And reaching where the brooklet
Did glide amongst the grass
Went up and down, as though it wished
Across the stream to pass.

The courtier drew his falchion,
And of it made a bridge;
Whereby the golden serpent passed,
And sought a rocky ridge.

And creeping in a cranny,
Some time no more was seen;
Then came and entered the king's mouth
Where it before had been.

Great wonder and much marvel
The courtier then did hold;
Who, when the king awakèd had,
The story to him told.

Then the king likewise related,
How, in a visioned dream,
He had travelled long and far until
He reached a rolling stream:

And as he sought along the bank
To gain the other side,
At last a bridge of polished steel
With joy he had descried.

And passing quickly over,
He reached the other land,
And entered by a marble stair
A palace vast and grand,

Where piles of goodly treasures
Of jewels and of gold,
Stored in the costly halls of state,
In glittering heaps were rolled.

And when he hasted back again
Across the flowing stream
To have the treasure borne away,
He wakened from his dream.—

When the king had told his vision
They called for pick and spade,
And soon within the stony bank
An open cave was made.

And as they dug the deeper
Such riches there were found
His kingdom's wealth could hardly buy,
All buried in the ground.

Then the king unto his palace
The treasure bore away;
And a right glad man he was, I wot,
For the hunting of that day.

This story I did gather
From an old and dusty tome
Read in an ancient library
One day in sunny Rome.

June 1867.

LXXXII.

VÂLMÎCI.

THE sage Vâlmîci, walking in a grove
By crystal Tamasâ, beneath the rank
Green foliage of uncounted years, where lank
Palms hung their plumes and odoured blossoms wove
Their garlands over many a lotus-cove,
Paused where two herons sported on the bank
In innocent play; and, as he watched, one sank
All bloody to the ground and did not move,

Shot from the bush. Then its companion fowl
Rose, shrieking round as though *it* felt the dart.—
'Never, whilst cycling ages onward roll,
'Sportsman,' he cried, 'shalt thou attain good fame;
For thou hast slain one of these two whose heart
Was fired with Love's divinely-lighted flame!'

LXXXIII.

THE SONG OF THE MILL.

WHEN summer airs are fresh and sweet,
And clover blossoms new,
And birds rejoice, and young lambs bleat,
And skies are clear and blue:
How merrily the mill goes round:
How merrily goes the mill,
As the hopper clacks with a cheery sound,
And echoes o'er the hill!

When age sits shivering by the fire,
And wintry wolds are white,
And youth doth chill his warm desire,
And frosty north-winds bite:
Still merrily the mill goes round:
And merrily goes the mill,
As the hopper clacks with a cheery sound,
When all the world is still.

We know no strife that plagues the great;
No care that kills the small:
We live above the reach of fate,
And, therefore, fear no fall,

So merrily the mill goes round:
So merrily goes the mill,
As the hopper clacks with a cheery sound,
And rings across the hill.

LXXXIV.

MICHAELMAS.

THERE are not many days 'twixt this and Michaelmas:
(I thank my God for the gift of his grace!)
My bonny lad left me a year come Michaelmas,
And promised me sure I should see his face
Ere another Michaelmas.

Ay, ay! I am old and poor, but honest.
Bless my lad from the depth of my heart:
But he stands like a man; his face is a grand one.
It went but hard with my years to part
From my boy last Michaelmas.

I am growing half dazed, I think, and foolish;
For I seem, at night, in my crazy old brain,
When the wind is blowing, to hear his whistle
Through the oak-tree leaves, from the end of the lane,
As he comes before Michaelmas.

LXXXV.

THE SAILORS' RETURN.

HARK, how the guns do rattle,
And the cannons roar!
Bells and flags with joy assail them:
All the land alive to hail them:
Seamen from the stormy battle:
Sailors come ashore.
There's Ben and Bill the boatswain;
There's Jack, with many more
Jolly tars come back and welcome
To their native shore.
So it's ho, boys, ho!
Whatever winds may blow
No matter, if we come and find
The lasses true we left behind,
Now may sailors know.

There's Bessy waiting on the strand;
There's Polly and there's Joan;
With twenty laughing children,
As sure as there is one.
Jack hath lost his right leg;
And stumps upon a wooden peg:
And Ben hath lost an arm;
Yet never doubt that what is left
Will clasp his Janet warm.
So goodbye to the stormy main!
Amidst their kisses
And their blisses
Seamen sing amain:

Ho, boys, ho!
Whatever winds may blow
Never mind
If we find
The lasses true we left behind,
Now may sailors know.

LXXXVI.

LADIES clothed in silk and pearl,
Glittering honours proudly bearing,
All your pomps could buy no curl
Of my true love's lightest wearing:
Her beauty is so wondrous grown,
The gods do take her for their own.

If in the wintry fields she goes,
Her splendid graces so become her,
That bleak December softly blows,
And thinks the year hath changed to summer,
And blooms the turf and leafs the bowers
To garland her sweet way with flowers.

LXXXVII.

THE GARDEN.

I KNOW a garden in a lowly vale
So fair that you would think within it lies
The ancient Paradise,
Closed in by shady woods that grow all round.

Great store of goodly flowers are in it found:
As scented almond blossoms whiter than
The breast of any swan;
Lilies and roses more than stars at night;

Staid violets and pinks: a wondrous sight:
And simple herbs; as dill and rosemary,
Basil and marjory;
With all that ever grew of balm and spice.

And on its lawns, in shady nooks, likewise,
From many marble fountains, rise around
Fresh streams with pleasant sound:
And, in long avenues of cypresses,

White statues stand in row: great Hercules;
Diana with her bow; and Venus come
But newly from the foam;
Cupid and Psyche; with a hundred more.

And then, for music, you may hear the roar
Of waterfalls, and birds that sing most clear:
All very sweet to hear:
The thrush, the nightingale, the morning lark.

Amongst the trees long alcoves run and dark:
But not too dark to see the butterflies,
With gorgeous, painted eyes,
Flit by or rest awhile upon a flower.

And if, at any time, a smiling shower
Should fall to feed the blossoms that are there,
Making them still more fair,
There are thick myrtle bowers wherein to go.

Think if this garden be well set or no;
Perfumed with orange trees and lemon trees,
And jasmine sweet as these:
All kept in order by deft gardeners!

Then, sometimes, when the low wind lightly stirs
The bowers at eve, where buds and blossoms twine,
My Lady walks therein,
Who is the queen of all that beauteous place.

There is a dawn of glory in her face.
Whenas she goes each flower lifts its head
And marvels at her tread;
It is so light and fairy-like a thing.

And then the wandering zephyr stays his wing;
Toying for love amongst her golden hair,
And lightly lingers there,
More odoured than in rosy-blossomed bowers.

As, in transparent seas, strange ocean-flowers
Beneath the shimmering surface may be seen;
So clear, untouched by sin,
Her thoughts gleam through the crystal of her eyes.

Her lips are red as two ripe strawberries;
And such rare music flows through them in speech,
(Read softly, I beseech!)
It is as though a dulcimer should speak.

Next comes the wonder of her perfect neck
Which, like a marble column chaste as snow
Tinged by the evening's glow,
Holds up her small and many dimpled chin:

Here cunning smiling Loves peep out and in,
And shoot their arrows. From her shoulders blown
Her long locks streaming down
About her ivory bosom wave and curl.

As to her feet, half hid in buckled pearl
And silk; in my opinion, they were meant
Each one to ornament
The other, and its fellow prettier make.

Her form its just proportion doth take
From every graceful thing that God has made:
As bird, and cloud, and blade
Of pensile grass that bears the morning dew.

Her presence, like soft sunshine, doth renew
The welcome fragrance of fresh-budded spring;
It is so sweet a thing:
Its life all other life doth interfuse.

She is not proud; but very gracious,
And mild in aspect as the earliest star.
The dress that she doth wear
Flows round her like a rivulet round a stone.

Her beauty from all beauteous things is won:
That, if she bear a lily or a rose,
One looks, but scarcely knows,
If she or it be framed in fairer mould.

Such graces hath she and so manifold,
No man in all the world knows how to name
More than the half of them.
Her soul is like the sea; so clear and fair

And wide, that heaven itself is mirrored there
To make the world more glad: but now I come
To treat of that calm home
Of noblest thoughts and purest influences—

No poet ever sung in Attic Greece
Such song as mine would be if I could tell
The story true and well
Of that high realm of Truth and Purity.

Go forth, my little song, and lightly fly,
Bearing amongst her bowers fresh and green
My duty to your queen;
And through the fading of the golden light
Whisper into her ear a low Goodnight!

LXXXVIII.

TELL me no more what sweetness dies
Untasted on that ruby lip,
Whose honeyed store more richly lies
Than that which Hybla bees do sip:
Nor of those eyes whose longed-for light
Doth shame the glories of the night.

Tell me no more what flowers have shed,
For love of her, their soul's perfume;
And, through her beauty perfected,
Have passed into a nobler bloom:
For Love those odoured flowers hath ta'en
To bind my heart with cruel chain.

LXXXIX.

FLORA.

WHERE silvery sunshine streaks the lawn she weaves
Her flowery garlands all the summer day;
Light zephyrs gliding through the rustling leaves;
Bright fountains tossing round their glittering spray.

White petals from the orange trees are shed;
The light fails slowly from the vault of blue;
But still she weaves, nor lifts her golden head
Gemmed with impearlèd drops of falling dew.

XC.

HE who to Time will be the slave,
And still will have and still doth crave;
Who by his gold and lands doth sue
For fame and honours not his due:
He only gathers splendid dust;
And mingles sordid rust with rust;
And builds a gorgeous tomb whereon
To write his name: Oblivion.

Give me the loving heart that lies
Beyond the reach of avarice:
A soul unbounded, thoughts as free
As birds and winds and waves oth' sea.

Such do not rot in gilded show
With trappings of unreal woe ;
But when they die a life maintain
In memories of grateful men.

XCI.

LEAVE thou the noisy gabble of the crowd ;
And learn to spell God's name in every flower ;
And let each bird that sings within its bower
Fill thee with angel music : each white cloud
To thee with heaven's own radiance be endowed
And blest ; and every silver-footed hour
Come as a message from the eternal tower
Whence the great Master sends his word abroad :
Shun soft delight, whose name is also ruth ;
Seize on the little good that thou canst reach,
Strong in the certainty of rich increase :
Thus, if thine ears be cups to wine of truth,
And open credence target to my speech,
Thy cry shall be no more : Alas, for peace !

XCII.

RESULTS.

TOO anxious souls that, dwelling on the Past,
From every moment and event would strive
Its own particular result to hive,
Turning distracted from the task at last,

Might read in this sweet flower the thing they waste
Themselves to gather; which, through storms that drive
The pungent east, and all the heavens give
Of sun or shade, hath held its being fast
Without a thought of issue: now content
To be what these have made it as their end;
Epitome complete and monument:
The very point to which their scope did tend:
Refiguring thus, by colour, form and scent,
Each breath and cloud and ray which therein blend.

XCIII.

MAN A SYMBOL.

WE do but that which we do scarcely know:
We are but organs of another mind:
We only speak what to us is assigned—
Smooth vanes to show which way the wind doth go:
Mere signs of occult Powers that lie below
Our thought and act: unconscious symbols: blind
Echoes of Utterances that hide behind
Our being—which in dreams will sometimes flow
More clearly unto us—wherein do meet
Nature's two sovran forces, Life and Death:—
The gentle air that feeds the blossom sweet,
And then destroys it with a ruder breath:
The sun that draws the tender herb beneath,
Then stamps it into dust with fiery feet.

XCIV.

TRUE LIBERTY.

WHAT makes great states and nations wise and good?
Changes of government at every turn,
Large commerce, wealth, enfranchised tongues that burn
With cries of Liberty ill understood,
(Sweet Liberty travestied to the mood
Of every flimsy gabbler that doth yearn
For note and place—a motley lightly worn!)
Whilst the grand names of Truth and Rectitude
Remain unspelled? Not here true Freedom lies,
Nor any greatness. Lords of tongue and pen,
Learn that right noble nationalities
Are made of honest and contented men
Free from all selfish personalities
Who count a duteous life their largest gain.

XCV.

THE FORTRESS.

THE man in whom are lit the heavenly fires
Of the great Life whereof the noblest tell—
Who hath not merely learnt the name of Well,
But lives and acts all that the Best inspires
With constant energy that never tires—
Hears neither praise nor censure: he doth dwell
Safe in the walled and moated citadel
Of governed, chaste and limited desires:

He gathers every good: his life is laid
In light: he breathes the sweetness of the rose:
His hour of pain and sorrow soon is gone,
And like the shadow of a dewdrop on
A leaf, holds still a point of light that glows
Ith' centre, brighter for the ambient shade.

XCVI.

WELL deemed those monks of old that to maintain
The soul's life pure and free—the world forsook—
'Twere wise to choose some solemn shaded nook,
Or lofty height outspread to sun and rain:
So gazing o'er this mighty mountain chain,
No other earthly thoughts the soul should brook
Than might be brought by varying skies that look
From yonder heaven upon the outstretched plain:—
For not alone to please the curious eye
Nature puts on her gorgeous-tinted dress;
But that our minds may be enthralled thereby
To search the mystery of her loveliness,
Wherein the hidden syllables do lie
Which God's wise purposes and truth express.

Monte Luco, July 1868.

XCVII.

A GROUP AFTER SIGNORELLI.

WITH sleek oiled curls and studied attitude,
Most daintily upon an altar stands
Smooth Antichrist; a demon his commands
Prompting behind him; at his feet are strewed
Great heaps of gold; a various multitude
Listens around well pleased, or talks in bands;
Whilst one explains at length, and one demands;
And all accept his specious servitude.—
Stern Luca Signorelli, satyre's lord,
This age's Antichrist is grown more bold,
And asks a broader sweep of thy bare sword;
For souls of men and women now are sold
In viler slavery to the harpy horde
Of Greed and Avarice and Lust of Gold.

Orvieto, October 1867.

XCVIII.

THE GOODLY DAYS OF OLD.

O THE goodly days of old
Have vanished from the earth,
When merit had its meed,
And humbleness its worth.
Now blatant voices rule
And men are bought and sold;
And quite forget the simple faith
Of the goodly days of old.

Then upright statesmen, free
From party motives base,
Ruled for their country's good;
And not for fame and place:
Then right was right, and truth
Was true wherever told;
For men were faithful to themselves
In the goodly days of old.

Now love is but a name,
And friendship but a show,
And modesty is shame:
It was not always so.
Then trust was trust indeed,
And hearts were brave and bold,
And of their neighbour thought no ill
In the goodly days of old.

The poor was then content:
The wealthy was not proud;
And gentleness in serge
As silken greatness show'd:
Then glory was not bought
With silver or with gold;
For virtue was an heritage
In the goodly days of old.

Then the metal, not the stamp,
Gave the value that it bore:
Men were counted for their worth;
And not for what they wore.

Now words are more than deeds;
And the weak and vain are bold;
Deriding all the nobleness
Of the goodly days of old.

Now the destitute may die
Whilst the wealthy millionaire
To make his riches more
Doth only strive and care.
Gone is sweet charity;
And hearts are hard and cold
That loved to help the indigent
In the goodly days of old.

The faith that held its God
In reverence and trust,
And scouted every lie,
Is changed to dust and rust.
Now fashion rules the world,
In headlong passions rolled,
Which makes men hate the liberty
Of the goodly days of old.

Ah, who shall bring us back
Through the selfish din and roar
The leal simplicity
Of the happy times of yore?
Choked in mad ambition,
Lost in the thirst for gold,
They have left the land for evermore,
Those glorious days of old.

XCIX.

TO MY COUNTRY.

GARDEN of pestilent weeds blown and unblown,
Contaminate page defiled with many a blot;
Once laid in light, now cast in shade thy lot,
With sordid aim and shameless greed o'ergrown:
My England, who dost all yet nothing own,—
Countless religions, Christ's remembered not,
Cries for the general good, whilst each man's thought
And life are centred in himself alone,—
How oft shall he whose hope doth in thee dwell
Bathe an unrestful couch with dolorous tears,
Thinking how Greece from all her glory fell,
And lordly Rome resigned her splendid years,
Sated with baneful wealth, torn in the hell
Of individual strife and selfish cares!

C.

THE LAW OF RIGHT.

THERE is a thing that often troubles me
With wonder. It is this: that man's intent,
For hope of bliss or fear of punishment,
Will reach towards Good, and let the Evil be
Untouched; and even hold his soul in fee
Of such a hope or fear; though only sent
To lead him to a nobler government,
More wide and grand, more glorious and free:

But Right because it *is* right no one loves;
Nor ever thinks that that must be the rule
For him which all the stars of heaven moves;
Nor feels, that he who sins, to the utmost Thule
Not only turns the whole world from its grooves,
But fools God's plan and makes himself a fool.

CI.

SELF-INFLUENCE.

AS children to their parents when grown old
Return their good with other good again;
Or like the usurer that makes his gain
By lending gold to be repaid with gold;
So Virtue's self should make itself a mould
Whose fair proportion may more fair contain;
A glass to take heaven's light without a stain,
That on the patent soul it may refold:
For if from others' graces grace may grow
By power of influence and love's impress,
So that which from our better selves doth flow
Should hold a standard rule and sway no less:
Thus every part of true-set lives should go
To make more noble Virtue's nobleness.

CII.

THE MEANS OF WEALTH.

WHY should our lives in weariness be spent
Searching for wealth whose good we only know
When for some other worth its worth doth go,
And only by its loss we gain content;

Whilst with our being naturally blent
A deeper tide of richer life may flow
Than heaps of gold and silver can bestow,
Without the aid of their expedient?
Treasures of larger measure bless the hind
In yonder cottage homestead by the grove,
Where simple confidence and faith do bind
True hearts a nobler destiny to prove,
And cheerful souls a competence can find
In tender acts of unsuspecting love.

CIII.

RECOLLECTIONS.

A THATCHED and ivy-gabled manor-hall:
A box-edged garden, haunt of summer bees:
An old grey orchard filled with apple trees,
In which the chaffinch all day long doth call:
A weathered seat beside a mossy wall:
A ponded common shared by hissing geese:
A long brown heath spread out to sun and breeze:
A solitary pine tree straight and tall:
A sloping upland thronged with lowing kine:
A hazel dingle sparkling after rain:
The soft approach of sleep to tirèd eyne:
The welcome dawn of joyous day again:
The sound of sabbath bells: those gales divine
That blow from realms without a mortal stain
To make the young heart fain:
These are the letters wherewith Memory
Spells a most blest and happy Infancy.

CIV.

LOVE IN THE ROSE.

TWO maidens wandered in a garden fair,
Shaming the pinks and lilies which their brows
Were twined withal,—the sweetest summer knows.
Most joyously breathed round the odoured air
Mixed with blithe songs of birds that carolled there,
When, with his bow laid by, in deep repose,
One saw Love lying cradled in a rose.
Then shaking from her face her waving hair:
O, look! she cried, what pretty thing is this,
Which, rocked by lulling winds, here sleeping lies?
And would have stooped to give the boy a kiss;
If only she might see those closèd eyes.
Just then he woke, and taking up a dart,
Drove it with cruel force right through her heart.

CV.

EPITHALAMIUM.

VIRTUOUS love and loyalty
Wedded at your birth have been:
Life approved and constancy
Perfect music intervene.

Friends of summer days and dawns
Washed in baths of purest dew:
Free of life as forest fawns:
Truth and trust are law to you.

Hand in hand and heart to heart;
Sweet communion of eyes:
Signs that shadow but in part
Love's profound sufficiencies.

Praises sweet as sweetest south
On your happiness must die:
To the slander-breathing mouth
Faith so firm will give the lie.

Burning at the clear heart's core,
Like the lamps before a shrine,
Symbolising something more,
Holy lights for ever shine:

Brighter than the blazing spires—
Alpine peaks at set of sun—
When the soul within expires
Enraptured; and the day is done:

Purer than a Lapland night
When the polar whirlwinds blow;
And the moon is round and white
Over many a league of snow.

Kisses sweeter than those are
Of two whitest lilies blown
But newly, when the morning star
Melts their dewdrops into one.

Heaped up roses by the score
Meetest offering should be;
And violets, a goodly store,
That hold the winds of spring in fee:

Pansies such as June doth throw
From his bosom prodigal;
Myrtle chaste and jasmine too,
More than summer hath at call.

CVI.

THE CONSTANT HEART.

THINK not my true affection
Should hold itself to blame,
Or that with time it loses one
Least sparklet of its flame.

To dance attendance on your grace
With those who take such part
Would be mere liking of your face,
Not loving of your heart.

But since my love to you doth tie
With more sincere respect
It makes its tenderest duty lie
In thoughtfuller neglect;

Nor shouts, on wayward breezes blown
Amongst the garrulous crowd,
Those finer charms, which better known,
Will scarce be spoke aloud.

The love that grows in one short day,
And lives upon the tongue;
Although it vaunt more brave display,
Will droop and die erelong.

But passion whose clear light doth mix
No elements of change
Doth in securer silence fix
That knows not how to range.

Be sure I leave no single charm
To my own heart untold:
Yet if my words should be more warm
My love might prove more cold.

CVII.

A WISH.

I WOULD that in some nook where summers fail
The latest—grassy slope, or shady brow
Of gentle hill where freshest breezes blow—
Life might unfold to us its happy tale
Together; dwelling o'er a spreading vale
Through which a winding river calm and slow
With dipping oar and snowy sail doth go.
So might we, heedless of the hard world's bale,
Reason of Life and high Philosophy,
By avarice and ambition all untainted;
And sometimes Clarice, queen of purity,
With sweeter face than Giotto ever painted,
Might bring her lute and chaunt the poetry
Which glows in those clear eyes already sainted.

CVIII.

THE CHILD OF NATURE.

DEAR child of Nature, in thy glance
The light of summer days doth dance,
To all fair things akin:
No wind that blows across the plain
But robs thy heart of mortal pain,
And puts a joy therein.

Men travel far and wide to learn
New systems, striving to discern
Fresh lights to make them wise;
They scale the lofty hills, they dive
The sea, a little truth to hive:
Thy wisdom nearer lies.

The tenderness of dawn, the flowers
That blow about the thickset bowers,
The brooks that wander free,
The clouds that sail the liquid sky,
Day's calm decline, night's galaxy,
Are gospels unto thee.

For thee fair Flora decks the glade;
For thee the butterfly is glad;
For thee all sweet sounds meet;
And, not to lose the general share
Of joy, the sunshine gilds thy hair,
And gambols at thy feet.

Thy beauty owns no touch of art;
For that is but the smallest part
  Which shines upon thy face:
And yet thy slightest smile doth twine
The inmost soul; such power is thine,
  And such a maiden grace.

Within the beaming of thine eye
There reigns a natural majesty
  Might well become a queen;
So calm thy soul sits on its throne,
In pious ways and gentle grown,
  So stainless and serene.

No flattering tongues shall buzz about
Thy praises in the noisy rout
  Where frivolous folly stirs:
Shut in these mountain solitudes,
The varying season's plenitudes
  Shall be thy ministers.

But sometimes, in life's changeful round,
If closed in gloom my soul be bound
  With care and trouble, may
Thy vision come, a thing of light,
To drive away my spirit's night,
  And bring a better day.

CIX.

SEBASTIAN BACH.

SEBASTIAN BACH, when listening to your strain,
More wondrous sweet than any words may tell,
I seem to wander through some flowery dell
Where tall, slim trees with many an ivy chain,
Take sun and shade, and songful birds are fain,
And wind-borne rustlings softly fall and swell,
Led by a white-robed angel, who doth dwell
In realms untouched by any mortal stain,
Where through enamelled banks a stream doth stray
Which murmurs soothingly its woodland story;
Until, at last, I reach a fuller day
Made glorious by that blessèd consistory
Of crownèd Spirits who rejoice alway
With psalms that ring through heaven's high clerestory.

CX.

BERNE.

I KNOW a fairy city
With spire and tower tall,
Quaint gables like the Chinaman's,
And the blue sky over all.

Around it runs a river,
Like a river in a dream;
Trim poplar, weeping willow
Reflected in its stream.

And from a breezy terrace,
  High above the swelling hills,
You may hear, at solemn twilight,
  The clacking of the mills,

When the city, lulled to silence,
  Glimmers through the falling night,
And the silver stars of heaven
  Sparkle slowly into sight.

It is full of toy-like houses;
  And about the houses run
Wooden galleries, carven basements,
  Flowery alleys in the sun.

Underneath its covered footways,
  And where its fountains flow,
White-bodiced, silver-filigreed,
  The Bernese damsels go.

Through the wide world though I wander,
  Yet wheresoe'er I turn,
O, let me go a-courting
  To the bonny town of Berne:

Woo my sweetheart: woo and marry her,
  And nevermore return
From my baby house in fairyland,
  The town of bonny Berne.

August 27, 1864.

CXI.

COMO.

ON the bosom of beautiful Como
The round moon is up to-night:
White villages glimmer and glisten
On its shores in the sparkling light.

And, down from its surface reflected,
The lights of the boats as they move
Find no world in its bed of crystal
To match with the one above.

Ah, no! for when Eden was making
There shone a rich gem from the rest,
And that is the beautiful garden
That gleams from thy waveless breast.

And when sin the sweet Paradise blasted,
And man of its glories bereft:
'Let us leave one fair spot,' said the angels,
'To show the bright land he has left.'

So Como, untouched in thy beauty,
Take the stars of the midsummer night:
Let the moon kiss thy ripples to laughter;
Let the morning still crown thee with light,

And change thee from splendour to splendour,
And over thee shimmer and glow,
Till thy spires touch the floor of the heaven
That shines in thy mirror below.

September 16, 1864.

CXII.

BY THE ARNO.

DANTE, when standing by the crystal brook
That crossed the realm of extreme purgatory,
Reproved by Beatrice of perfidy,
Within the waters cast a shamèd look;
And seeing written there, as in a book,
The evidence of his disloyalty
Flushing his cheek and moistening his eye,
The flowery margin hastily forsook:
So let me not forsake thee, Arno, bride
Of this fair earth and yonder heaven of blue;
But rather, leaving all my human pride,
The senses' thrall and care, my life renew,
By these calm influences purified;
That, even as thou dost thy sweet way bestrew
With flowers of every hue,
So I may journey on; nor fear to see
These mortal lineaments expressed in thee.

Florence, 1864.

CXIII.

SANTA MARIA DEL FIORE.

LIKE some huge growth of Nature, wondrous Dome,
Thou risest, witness, through the human roar
Rolling below thee, of Almighty Power,
And that Eternity, thy natural home,

To which our noisy generations come;
Thyself untouched by change, calm monitor,
For ever listening, from yon marble tower,
The passing hours proclaimed with solemn boom.
Races of men shall vanish: years shall run
From age to age: but thou, still calm and grand,
Shalt greet the advent of the daily sun,
Companioned by the stars at night, and stand,
With those vast pyramids on Egypt's sand,
The symbol of a mighty purpose won.

Florence, December 1868.

CXIV.

ON SOME WALL PAINTINGS BY BENOZZO GOZZOLI.

THOU hast a world, Benozzo, all thy own,
So full of freshness that one feels the air
Shake the clear dew-drops from the roses there,
And hears the brook sing over sand and stone;
With spreading pine and pillared cypress grown,
And breadths of sunny garden planted fair,
And winding roads by spicy hill-sides rare;
And through the land, with bright hair backward blown,
Glad angels bear great heaps of gathered flowers,
Or hold sweet converse in sublime delight,
Or, singing, sit within the blossomed bowers,
Or sometimes muse, with such a glorious light
Upon their faces poured in heavenly showers,
The soul is raised and gladdened at the sight.

Riccardi Chapel, Florence, December 17, 1868.

CXV.

AT PASSIGNANO.

NOT merely to delight æsthetic eyes
Is this smooth lake unfolded to the morn,
And yonder upland crowned with golden corn;
Nor do those tender-shadowed mountains rise
And bare their bosoms to the winds and skies
This world of beauty only to adorn;
But that from their pure influence may be born
Within our hearts those fine humanities
Which draw us to our fellow-creatures nigher,
And make us willing servants to their need.
Far from the busy world was lit the fire
That burned the stubborn growths of thorn and weed,
By him who cried, Repent! in his desire
To clear the furrow for the Sower's seed.

Lake Thrasimene, 1867.

CXVI.

The summer's flower is to the summer sweet,
Though to itself it only live and die.
SHAKESPEARE.

WAR not with Nature: let her empire rest
Respected in its chartered liberty,
By wanton acts of wilful injury
And selfish aims and passions unoppress'd:
Nor think, with human pride, 'tis only blest
In blessing you; for thus, unworthily,
Is stained God's truth and half his love put by,
And t'other half a plaything puppet drest.

The oak that thrives beside the mountain creek;
The flower that blooms in desert fastnesses;
The clouds that climb unseen the craggy peak;
The birds that sing on undiscovered leas;
Lone set and rise of suns, if they could speak,
Would give the lie to such conceits as these.

CXVII.

THE SOUL OF BEAUTY.

THOUGH Beauty lives in Virtue, Order, Law,
Yet these are not itself, they only are
The covering its splendid soul doth wear—
Mere names which from its proper substance draw
A kind of being: for the eye ne'er saw,
Nor e'er can see how fair the Wholly Fair
Lives in the glory of its own clear air;
Transmitting through all forms of grace and awe
Its essence, which, in widening, fainter grows
From grade to grade, like circles on a river,
Till that by which our loftiest fancy glows
Is but a point whereat a wave doth quiver—
The echo of a mighty strain which flows
Through boundless space for ever and for ever.

CXVIII.

STRENGTH IN QUIETNESS.

SO faint the line that marks the sea and sky,
It seems as though the ships sailed in the air;
Whilst, at her spinning-wheel, without a care,
The cottage maiden carols merrily,
And the near ocean murmurs listlessly:
Yet in its tranquil bosom, clear and fair,
Dwell potent forces, might beyond compare,
Which, even now, to him who listens, cry:
Hold thou, whilst Life's calm current flows along,
Heroic powers that still their rule maintain;
Courage to fight against the soul of wrong;
Unconquered energies that master pain;
Keen foresight; prudence, and a will so strong
That circumstance shall rear its rocks in vain.

Fano, July 1868.

CXIX.

ON THE BANKS OF THE METAURUS.

YE cumbered with the world's hard servitude,
In iron links of galling bondage bound,
Leave for a while the press and noisy round,
And bide with me in this cool solitude,
Feeding with quiet joy a peaceful mood,
Beneath acacia boughs whose whispering sound
Is mingled with the hollow sea's rebound
And falling streams' melodious interlude,—

Away from trivial fopperies of those
Whose barren spirits make no sign of growth;
Who hold a tinsel life of painted shows,
Cheats that outmock the vanity of youth,
Dyed in a shallow pride of peacock hues
That hath no substance of intrinsic truth.

Fano, August 1, 1868.

CXX.

THE FESTA AT GENAZZANO.

STERN grey from an ocean of crags, ere the morn
Had breathed from the east or made livid the moon,
Olevano's height, ivy-plumed and forlorn,
Frowned down from its castle: the world lay aswoon.

We rose: all was hushed as the corpse in his grave:
The stars glimmered out through the fissures of night;
And, ridging the universe, wave after wave,
The crests of the mountains were rolled out of sight.

Through the gloom we fared forth dropping down from the hill,
A Hun and a Frank, an Italian and I:
Not a word: step for step: each echo lay still:
Scarce an audible breath or the hint of a sigh.

We skirted the vineyards ; we traversed the vale ;
We saw the white road like a river run through,
As the last breath of night wandered by with a wail,
And the bloom of the morning blushed over the blue.

The stars had gone out from the amethyst sky ;
The sick moon had sunk from the brim of the world ;
And wide, o'er the hills and the valleys, on high
A curtain of feathery gold was unfurled.

One moment the mountains were belted with night :
One moment the earth was asleep and adream :
Then up shot the sun from a fountain of light,
And, poised on a peak, swept the land with his beam :

And, soft as the voice of a breeze-laden pine,
A carol came floating round meadow and height :
Ora pro nobis !—like echoes divine
That, returning to heaven, expire in the flight.

O, brave were the peasants with ribbon and rose :
Bronze faces, fine forms clad in blue and in brown :
Tall maidens and matrons with Hebe-like brows
Burden-crowned through the quaint whitened gateway came down.

But I left for an hour the noise and the fray,
And by an old palace sat down in the shade,
Where, near a long aqueduct crumbled and grey,
Men, women and children laughed, chatted and played.

At last came the 'tombola': round went the wheel:
And, when the prize-numbers were called out aloud,
Drum, trumpet and trombone were sounded with zeal,
Midst the barking of dogs and the shouts of the crowd.

And round went the world through the kingdom of light:
Shafts of splendour burst up from the pathway of day:
Rosy-rich the far hills took the earnest of night:
Purple-steeped in broad shadow the mighty plain lay.

But the glow of the evening in deep-bosomed space,
And the cloudlets that floated like fleeces of flame,
Were mixed with the marvel of one haunting face,
And the nightingale sang in his song of the same.

Ah, well: it is gone with the sun and his gold:
The stars glimmer out, and we tramp as at morn:
And yonder I see, through a misty dim fold,
Olevano's height ivy-plumed and forlorn.

September 8, 1865.

CXXI.

THE BRIDGE OF SIGHS.

WE stood on the Ponte Rotto ;
The Tiber was rolling below ;
The nets and the mill-wheels were turning
In the dark river's turbulent flow.

The moon on the temple of Vesta
Shone with a glimmering light ;
The city around us reposing,
Veiled in the vapours of night.

The jest and the laughter were echoed
By turret and tottering wall,
Whilst a planet high up in its glory
Glittered and gleamed over all.

Then she said who was standing beside me,
As the tears rose into her eyes,
Yonder bridge in the shadow for ever
To me is a Bridge of Sighs.

We know not at life's first waking
What sorrows may find us with years :
How oft have I traversed it groaning,
With a heart brimful of hot tears !

Dark years too sad for bewailing,
Bright hours too fleeting for praise :—
Ah, well : if you wish for my story,
I will tell it you one of these days.

Then the laughter and song were reëchoed
From temple and turret and wall,
And the planet in changeless glory
Sparkled and burned over all.

Rome, June 1, 1868.

CXXII.

SIGNOR LORENZO, if it e'er befall
That I should dine in gorgeous halls of state,
On sumptuous viands with the rich and great;
(Not seldom condiments of acrid gall):
How oft may I the simple feast recall,
Undecked with splendour of well-polished plate;
But dressed with Attic nicety, though late:
The painted landscape on the chamber-wall:
The scented jasmine by the balcony:—
Too happy, if my dream more to beguile,
I hear the silver waves break ripplingly
Of the sweet Tuscan speech—the noble style
That graces Italy—engilded by
The clear bright sunshine of Emilia's smile!

CXXIII.

NETTUNO.

A GLOOMY length of landscape by the sea
Stretching away from heaps of barren sand
And harsh, dry sedges sighing wearily
For desolation of the doleful land,
To where the upland slopes, and wood and lea
Look down in mourning o'er the dreary strand.

A wretched town half fallen to decay:
A stern grey castle crumbling down time-worn,
Round which the moaning breakers crawl alway;
And from the fissures of its walls forlorn
The wild fig hangs, with many a sickly spray
Of maidenhair, its withered pride to mourn.

Antium, May 1866.

CXXIV.

LO! in the west the glowing sunset lies
Steeped in the glory of a thousand dyes:
The creamy waves just fringe the yellow shore;
Each hollow grot gives back their feeble roar:
Rocked in his boat the fisherman at ease
Sings out his cheerful carol to the breeze:
Above the misty mountains blue and far
The pale moon rises with the evening star:
Dim night is gathering over, cool and still:
Faint lights begin to twinkle on the hill:
Hark! from yon convent tower, with mournful boom,
The vesper bell sound through the growing gloom:
Bim bome!

Amalfi, September 1866.

CXXV.

THE BRINDISI.

BRING hither ivy, thick with glossy leaves,
Green-berried, gathered when the grapes are full
And longing for the vintage: neither leave
The tendrilled vine untouched; but also bring
A fruitful branch, beloved of Bacchus, hung
With bunches red with kisses of the sun,

To twine this well-filled cup. And he who holds
Twin mind with mine will come and drink likewise
The health of one whose heart is to my heart
As jewel unto setting; flowers to bees;
Who leaves me for a distant land, nor fears
The uncertain sea. So may we both rejoice:
He on blue waves propitious with fair winds,
And I beneath this fig-tree's pleasant shade
Drinking from wreathèd goblets precious wine.

CXXVI.

NOT where the pall of harsh and acrid hazes
Broods over sodden leaves withered ere yet
Summer should say adieu, and from the wet
Trees trickling downwards upon flowery faces,
Cold, tearful rains do wash away the traces
Of warm days dead, leaving a dull regret
For sunshine past and gone: me, rather, let
The lingering season woo in shady places,
Beside the sea that murmurs on a strand
Where skies all blue smile always overhead,
And sometimes comes—ah, here she is! that grand
Greek pose and poise, with store of white and red
Flowers: not one or two; but armsful, and
A basket of new fruit upon her head.

Sorrento, October 1866.

CXXVII.

ALL round the blue sea twinkles in the sun,
With here and there a slow sail wandering by,
Like a white sea-bird through a sapphire sky:
By myrtle-bank and ruined castle blown,
The soft wind breathes a gentle undertone,
And shakes the fig, and makes the olive sigh,
About each snowy cot, melodiously.
Such pastoral scenes might make fit home for one
Whose daily toil hath known calm interlude
Of stedfast hope and deep contentedness
Possessed through hours of thoughtful solitude;
Whose fruitful life such heavenly harvests bless,
That, in the ripened fulness of his mood,
The very lack of joy is happiness.

Island of Capri, August 1866.

CXXVIII.

SIX olives and a vineyard small
Beside a tumbling waterfall:
An earth so fair, a sky so blue
That heaven itself seems smiling through:
A flask of wine more nectarous than
Old Bacchus drunk with noisy Pan:
With songs of birds and heaps of flowers:
Cool shades of oleander bowers:
A quiet mind; a heart at ease:
A book or friend just framed to please:
Plain fare and rustic joys be mine;
And then with kings I would not dine.

Tivoli, 1865.

CXXIX.

ON A FOUNTAIN IN THE CAMPAGNA OF ROME.

'TIS said, beside this crystal fountain, where
Green maidenhair and glossy ivy string
Their wreaths, some Naiad once would sit and sing,
With strain so ravishing, the very air
Would pause enchanted, and the traveller
Would hold his breath, entranced in listening,
And nightingales would cease their carolling,
Greedy the warbled harmony to share.
And still the loiterer within this dell,
Watching the waning daylight as it dies,
May hear, through chimings of the vesper bell,
Charmed by a vagrant fancy's reveries,
The nymph's clear music softly fall and swell
More sweetly for the silent centuries.

CXXX.

MORNING ON THE PINCIAN HILL.

PILGRIMS grown grey in search of happiness
Lay down your scrip and staff and rest awhile
To see how clear and blue the heavens smile
Between these palms and lofty cypresses;
Whilst, like a bride whose beauty is not less
For that which half conceals it, dome and tile
And campanile stretched for many a mile
Are veiled in mist of perfect peacefulness;

The small birds chirp: the fountain falls below:
Glad children shout, on merry pastime bent:
The roses round exhaling as they blow,
For bounty of the time, their sweetest scent:
The great gun thunders from Saint Angelo:
The river glides along in calm content.

Rome, January 15, 1868.

CXXXI.

HOW rich and great is he who still doth hold
The firm dominion of his stablished soul
Within the golden realm of sweet content:
Who, though black storms and tempests do him fold,
And hungry billows yawning round him roll,
Grasps the obedient helm with fixed intent.

Nurtured by silence in the womb of time,
Through morn and eve and many seasons' change,
In dark, unblossomed places rarely trod;
By yearlong contemplations of the prime
And end of things, with slow step he doth range,
Until, at last, he gains the feet of God.

No more the thrall of circumstance, his way
Henceforward lies amongst the circling spheres;
Borne in vast cycles of unbounded thought
Through shining regions of ethereal day,
The world's wild murmur fails within his ears,
The whilst his wise calm soul is filled and taught
With the rich music of heaven's loftiest lay.

CXXXII.

TO one who well observes, it will appear,
How the smooth Time doth make itself a glass
In which False Seeming may behold its face;
And worth is only prized that silk doth wear;
And vice is only vile that rags doth bear;
And bartered love can only find a place
On oily tongues, that once warm hearts did grace;
And simple living is but ill to fare;
And lies go forth sealed with white truth's impress;
And truth doth bear the signet of a lie;
And broken faith joins hand with fickleness:
For thus the foolish world goes all awry.
But be thou fixed in truth and stedfastness,
Giving thyself good heed continually.

CXXXIII.

NATURE, from our inclusions we discern
Thy fitting adaptations, and with awe
See thee amenable to science, law,
Art, intellect and sentiment; and burn
With wonder as thy subtle ways we learn:
But if my feeble judgment do but draw
Me rightly towards the truth, herein some flaw
From the right track our wonderings doth turn:
For thou those and our Reason dost contain
By right of lordship far more excellent;
Seeing we are but drops of thy large Main,

Concretes of thy vast Abstract eminent:
And not we thee, but thou dost us explain,
Through loftier laws of wider precedent.

CXXXIV.

THE STRICKEN DEER.

'TIS said, that if a stag with bleeding wound
Return to where his first companions feed,
They have no pity for him in his need;
But turn, with cruel horns, and gore him round.
So with the darkened spirit, I have found,
Whom weight of care should to his fellows lead:
They cry: 'This man has lost all grace indeed,
Or never had it'; —closed in self and bound:
Nor see that God's vast love and wisdom meet
Beyond the limits of their narrow way:
That purest gold is fined by fiercest heat:
And cloudy mornings oft make clearest day:
With hardest strokes the firmest steel is beat:
And strongest vessel formed of well-trod clay.

CXXXV.

NATURES there are so over-sensitive,
An act of awkwardness will leave a sting
Within them, as it were a sinful thing,
And echo of a mistimed word will give

A day-long murmur like a summer hive,
Sometimes in tranquil hours awakening
A cry of subtle pain, remembering:
Thus life in joy and strength can never thrive.
But such should recollect, within the soul
There dwells a power sufficient for its needs;
And he who would his noblest self control
Must be the arbiter of all its deeds:
For not alone he reaches Fame's true goal
Who on the field of battle fights and bleeds.

CXXXVI.

JOHN KEATS, when singing of the Nightingale,
Says, that 'to think is to be full of sorrow,'—
With such fine music that itself might borrow,
And waken lovelier echoes through the vale:—
But here I think, his minstrelsy doth fail
Somewhat of truth, and is not hale and thorough
For if the cry of the unborn to-morrow
Must vex to-day with predicated wail,
This world would be no Eden, it is true,
Nor have a moment's ease until the end:—
Now, I think, Thought should be baptised in dew
Of purity and peace, and be one's friend;
And, robed in joy, with smilings sweet and new
The present and the future both commend.

CXXXVII.

DUTY AND PLEASURE.

WALKING in Maytime through the meadows gay
With many a blossom, where a stream did glide,
I met two women: one dressed as a bride
And light of step; the other, sober, grey
And matronly, with smile, as one might say,
Somewhat severe, but not morose; her stride
Measured and thoughtful. Standing by my side,
She said, This is your spouse, more fair than day:
But ere the time shall come that you may wed,
You shall have passed through many a stormy fight,
On many an arid desert wept and bled:
Be true: clear day is born of gloomy night:
Great honours spring of faithful lowlihead,—
With this they vanished quickly from my sight.

CXXXVIII.

THE ANCHOR.

ALTHOUGH things earthly are so short and frail;
And though the laugh doth wait upon the sigh,
And spring doth woo the blossom but to die;
And summer quickly run to winter's bale;
And iron strength doth sometime bow and fail;—
So soon this mortal being passing by,
Swift pursuivant of immortality,
Like proudest vessel, strikes its swelling sail:

Yet he who holds his course in righteousness
Shall clear his conscience of uneasy qualms:
His soul within him shall be bright no less
Shut from the music of those silvery psalms
Immortals sing; for, more his life to bless,
He knows that he shall live to strew the palms.

CXXXIX.

THE USES OF ADVERSITY.

ALL you whose souls have battled in the press
Of warring foes through rude adversity,
Suffering such grievous buffetings thereby
No tongue of man nor words may them express;
When light grows fuller and the darkness less,
Through welcome dawn of sweet prosperity,
Think not to compensate the pains gone by
With soft joys bred of velvet wantonness,
Unworthy panders to ignoble sense;
But trim your soul's lamp that it shine more bright:
Knowing your treasure is the experience
That tells you how to use these gifts aright,
Much more than their intrinsic recompense,
Which of itself might prove but rust and blight.

CXL.

CONSOLATIONS.

LET us not murmur that, for mortal dower,
No gift of genius crowned us at the birth;
So that our best seems but of little worth,
And all our yearnings mocked by feeble power:

For still the spring will bring his leaf and flower;
And still, when summer comes, the fruitful earth
On sunny uplands smile in wonted mirth;
And still will flow through brook and bush and bower
Streams from the Eternal Fountain's vast supplies
By which the universal spirit lives:—
Then let us be content to feel and know,
Through humble sense of insufficiencies,
And joyful faith in Wisdom's hand which gives,
That though we fail the Tree of Life doth grow.

CXLI.

THE LOST JEWEL.

WHERE is the quality of that fine grace
Which kept the heroes of the olden time,
Who loved their cause more than themselves sublime
In vision and in action: such a race
As writ its name on Right, nor claimed a place
In human record; counting it as crime
To leave Wrong scatheless: men who scorned climb
To fame through duty; foes to all things base:
Who asked no other guerdon than to hold
A faculty of glorious thought, the dower
Of noble purpose and undaunted will;
A lofty peace; a soul pure, wise and bold,
Above the shadows of the fleeting hour
And changing tides of mortal good and ill?

CXLII.

FAME AND HONOUR.

PASSING along the broad high road one day
I met two maidens: one True Worth was hight,
And one was Modesty: both clothed in white.
And other two went with them by the way,
Haughty of look and clad in brave array,
With tawdry ribbons and false gems bedight;
And this a gilded sceptre bore upright,
And on the narrow brows of that there lay
A tinsel crown hung round with bells whose chime
With tinkling music ever waited on her:
Then asked I: Who are these? And Worth replied
(Whilst Modesty bent down her head, and sighed,
Stung with deep shame for the degenerate time
So fallen): That is Fame and this is Honour.

CXLIII.

THE INNER KINGDOM.

WELL is he, who through Time's devouring cares
Retains an inner kingdom unsubdued
By restless shiftings of the multitude
And heavy yoke that changeful fashion wears—
Who in the convent of his bosom bears
A peace unstirred by noisy tempests rude,
The ripened offspring of sweet solitude
And hopes engendered through long, silent years.

He cares not though the surges round him swell,
Bursting their harmless billows round his breast:
Full happy that he finds a quiet cell
Wherein his heart may say, in perfect rest,
Here is my home: here it is good to dwell:
Here all my aims and hopes and life are blest.

CXLIV.

COMPLAIN not that the bounds of life are small;
Nor seek to pass the limits of thy being:
The wisdom of the eye is in the seeing
That which surrounds it; not in seeking all
That lies beyond: the plant upon the wall
Finds those conditions with its growth agreeing.
All that we have and are is but the feeing
Of the Eternal with the Temporal.
Here is thy destiny, where thou art placed;
Bound and defined by those contingencies
Which make existence to thee what it is.
So work, live, think, contend and strive in this,
That when another nobler state shall rise
Thy brow with victor laurels may be graced.

CXLV.

THE DARK VEIL.

NOT always Nature all her beauty shows
By tender lines with purest tints endowed;
But sometimes, like a mother's frown allowed
To hide a smile, her graces doth inclose

Beneath harsh aspects: as a cataract's throes;
Or a bleak rock sun-baked and winter-ploughed;
Or the jagged border of a thunder cloud;
Or the fierce bending of a lion's brows:—
Yet he who looks upon her with an eye
Clear in the faith of her great nobleness
And sense of her most perfect unity,
Will see a kind of beauty scarcely less
In these than in the crimson clouds that lie
About rich sunsets, or the flowers that bless
With odoured loveliness
The woods and fields when feathered minstrels sing
Full summer growing out of blissful spring.

CXLVI.

SPRING COMPANIONS.

A FEW small mosses creeping on a stone,
The earliest work of Spring's green broidery;
The white wings of a new-born butterfly;
A cawing rook; a twittering bird; the drone
Of a slow beetle; the melodious tone
Of splashing fountains faintly floating by
On perfumed wind: such sweet society
Will never let the pure heart feel alone.
And if with these some happy verse be wrought,
As in fair tapestry a golden thread,
Petrarch or Dante, coming all unsought,
Or northern bard who asks no scantier meed,
To fill the interspace of silent thought
With tuneful chord, then is it blest indeed.

Villa Borghese, Rome, January 11, 1868.

CXLVII.

SWEET nightingale, whose warbled notes are shed
In vain my wearied sense with Sleep to bind,
Go to the moonlit muffled grove, and find
The ivied cave where he doth hide his head,
With madragore and nodding poppies spread,
Half veiled in dewy buds and tendrils twined
With many a folded wreath about the rind
Of mossy boles, by Night and Silence fed;
And bid him lightly come in shoes of list,
Bringing some dream of summer flowers that wink
Through sun and shade, where, by soft zephyrs kiss'd,
The shepherd maid sits spinning at the brink
Of a low-murmuring stream when woods are whist,
And snowy flocks come down at noon to drink.

Rome, 1868.

CXLVIII.

THE LEGEND OF SANTA MARIA MAGGIORE.

FERVENTLY the good Johannes,
Praying, asked a sign from heaven,
How to use to noblest purpose
All the wealth that God had given.

Slept the clustered vines of August:
Slept the solemn cypresses:
Only waked the mellow-throated
Nightingales amongst the trees.

Lightly lulled to peaceful slumber;
Dreaming in the happy night,
Came the blessed Virgin to him
Robed in folds of blissful light.

Tenderly she smiled upon him:
All her accents sweeter far
Than the nightingale's low carol
Chanted to the evening star:

'The Lord has heard thy prayer in heaven:
'His love and mercy never fail:
'And thou shalt build a temple to Him
'There where I lay down my veil.'

One by one the bright stars faded:
In the rose the dewdrops kiss'd:
Golden clouds like angels floated
Through a sky of amethyst.

Then arose the good Johannes
Wondering what his dream might mean;
Wandering through the ripening vineyards
Of the sunny Esquiline:

Stood upon the level summit,
Pondering still, when, lo! he found
A fall of summer snow was lying,
Shaped to pattern, on the ground.

Then his dream was clear unto him;
And he told the miracle;
And they came with swinging censer,
Burning lights and book and bell:

Blessed the spot, and raised upon it
Pillared roof with shrine below;
And they named from Her the temple,
'Holy Mary of the Snow.'

Rome, 1867.

CXLIX.

THE HOUR OF AVE MARIA.

AVE MARIA! from a hundred bells
Sounds underneath the violet dome of eve:
Even the wakeful owl forgets to grieve
About the broken walls and ferny dells,
So soothingly the holy music swells
And falls, proclaiming weary Day's reprieve,
As through the tracery sylvan nymphs enweave
To hide the moss-grown entrance of their cells,
The white moon rises, clear in majesty,
Drinking the crimson glory of the fire
That fills the west, this frail mortality
Wholly consuming on its phœnix-pyre,
Whilst star-crowned angels from the stainless sky
Lean, whispering, Dear brother, come up higher!

Rome, February 1868.

CL.

TIME'S COMPENSATIONS.

OLD TIME, that knows so well to use his shears,
Sometimes, those laid aside, doth bring with him
Clear visions, full-blown memories through the dim
Vast gulf of far and faintly looming years,

Like flowers that bloom through rain of misty tears.
Thus, standing by a fountain's moistened brim:
Two sculptured horsemen strong of thew and limb
Reining two marble horses: in my ears
The soothing murmur of the falling spray
Dying amidst the hush and gloom of Rome;
Right suddenly the fountain passed away,
With horse and horseman, tower and roof and dome;
And, once again, led by a summer's day,
I roamed the meadows of my English home.

June 22, 1868.

CLI.

AT VENICE.

THE white sail slips across the blue lagoon;
The sun shines through the broad unclouded sky,
King of the world: the light wind wanders by,
Laden with happy sounds; then seems to swoon
For rapture of the golden afternoon,
Soothing life's pulses with the lullaby
Of a sweet music wafted tremblingly
From Love's own heaven, like the inward tune
That orbs a thrilling mood of fixed devotion.—
Though men affirm thy gold is dimmed and hoary,
Queen of the Sea, and thou art fallen in story,
Yet thou to me shalt keep thy pristine glory
Whilst in the azure bosom of the ocean
Thy white domes sleep and dream without a motion.

February 1869.

CLII.

THE DEATH OF THE DAY.

DOWN in the brooding west a fiery glow
Of orange lies: no airs of evening play
Over the broad lagoon: laborious, slow,
The spectral ships, tracking their homeward way,
Black dropping sails against the sunset go,
Like mourners to the funeral of the Day,
Each with his solemn shadow fixed below;
One after one; along the distant quay
The clear lights sparkle: dome and tower grow dim:
The pale stars glimmer faintly overhead:
A crescent moon just shows a silvery rim:
The hour of Ave rings: the air is fed
With floating music of the boatman's hymn
Blent with far murmurings: the Day is dead.

Giardini Publici, Venice, Feb. 1869.

CLIII.

ON A PAINTING BY TITIAN.

CALM eyes wide open filled with tenderness,
Within whose soulful depths there seems to dwell
The sweet records of peace unspeakable
Shrined in imperishable loveliness:
A sunny brow: gold hair: a seriousness
Wherein truth shines as stars within a well—
Richer than smiles: lips which in silence tell
Heaven's secret of eternal blessedness.—

Thy touch so gracious, Titian, and so bland,
Charged with those sympathetic hues which sleep
In rarest visitations doth employ,
That love itself would bid thee stay thy hand;
Nor strike another mighty pencil-sweep
Lest deep delight should swoon o'er-brimmed with joy.

Santa Maria dei Frari, Venice, March 1869.

CLIV.

SITTING one day within a shady wood
Love came to me; not tripping laughingly
As is his wont; but pacing soberly,
Frounced all in black as one in dolorous mood;
And, seated by me, asked with voice subdued
And sad: Why dost thou mourn, loved brother? I,
With broken sighs and weeping, made reply:
I mourn that death has robbed me of the good
Of all my life. Nay, mourn her not, he said;
For, had she lingered here, harsh Pain and Ruth
Would perhaps have found her: wrinkled Age have laid
A rude hand on her: now she lives, in truth,
Within thy loving heart immortal made,
Clothed in the bloom of a perpetual youth.

CLV.

GIROLOMA.

A LITTLE from the town withdrawn
She dwelt upon a hill-side lawn,
With olive groves and vineyards near.
I wish that lovely smile of hers
Could melt itself throughout my verse:
It would be very sweet to hear!

A lighter step, a fairer mien
I think I never since have seen,
Nor heard a more delicious voice.
That full and rounded Tuscan tone
Made pain and grief forget to groan,
And even sorrow's self rejoice.

She gave her heart to one, alas!
Who knew not what a gift it was,
And proudly scorned the noble prize:
And so she walked as one who mourned
Until her inward grief had burned
The happy light from her sweet eyes.

Poor child! she suffered long, 'tis said,
And moaned for weeks upon her bed
Before she found this place of ease.
It is not much: a grassy mound,
A simple cross with wild flowers round,
Between two rows of cypresses.

Siena, September 1867.

CLVI.

BREATHE lowly, breezes, softly blow
All rosy odours round,
In praise of her who lies below
This plot of daisied ground.

In busy multitudes unnamed;
Not very great or wise;
But loving much and sweetly framed
Of tender sympathies.

Her heart with childish life was stirred
And blest, till on a day,
Death came and whispered but a word;
And so she went away.

CLVII.

INSTABILITY.

WHEN I behold the silken blossom shed
Its petals ere it reach its perfect bloom,
And suns of May for clouds of March make room,
And crownèd might bow down its crownless head,
And seeing eyes by sightless footsteps led,
And stars of hope expire in starless gloom,
And life by cruel death borne to the tomb,
And love from lovely beauty banishèd;

Then doth my eye with brackish tides o'erflow,
And stormy sighs disturb the soul's calm deep,
And nimble-footed time doth limping go,
And motion of the world doth hardly creep
For sorrow that this state men value so
Such trustless tenure of its good doth keep.

CLVIII.

THE LOVING HEART.

SINCE Love hath made this heart his joyous room
I have no other thoughts than thoughts of bliss:
And in my strivings day by day would be
His worthy harbinger, and not his tomb:
For frailest symbol is the short-lived kiss
Of that eternal light that burns in me.

I would not be like other maids therefore,
Who love for him they love and him alone:
For he may die; but Love can never die:
And he may change; but Love for evermore
Remains the same, and with unchangèd tone
Sings in the happy heart continually.

This makes that in my soul I no more fear
The ills of life, nor that which death can take:
But every flower becomes a double flower;
And skies that erst were clear are much more clear
And Love that still I love for Love's sweet sake
Reigns and rejoices in his fixèd tower,
And smiles, and still will smile upon the bier.

CLIX.

TO MY DIVINE MISTRESS.

> Questa donna fu figlia d' Iddio, regina di tutto, nobilissima e bellissima Filosofia.
>
> DANTE, *Il Convito*.

IT is not that thy eyes are bright
As sparks that flash on summer seas;
Or that thy smile is like the light
That doth the chilly dawn unfreeze:
Though this and those are more to me
Than heaps of gold to others be.

It is not that thy form doth hold
The fruit of all perfection;
Or, as thou goest in mortal mould,
The glories of the sky do run:
Though for the wonder of thy grace
Fair Venus' self doth hide her face.

It is not that the sounds which fill
The organ of thy silvery throat
Do bid the nightingale be still
To learn from thee a nobler note:
Although thy speechless silences
Are sweeter than most melodies.

No: not for these, though these are fair,
My vassal heart is bound to thee:
But for that thy soul's bounties are
Compact of such rare purity,
That in thy Wisdom and thy Love
All creatures live and worlds do move.

CLX.

NO earthly sound was that which filled my ears
When, standing on the topmost peaks of youth,
Straining my sense to catch a chord of Truth,
If such might be, rolling along the years
That bound Life's narrow world of smiles and tears,
I heard thy lofty music sweep the smooth
And fenceless road that Fancy paves with ruth
For those who leave Time's rightful hopes and fears:
I say, it was no mortal voice that came
And bade my soul forsake the flowery way
For nobler joys and cares, lit by thy flame
Philosophy: for clearer in thy ray
Heaven's glory shines; and, lighted by the same,
Earth's darkest night is turned to brightest day.

CLXI.

THE noble Lady whom I live to serve
Is moulded in such grace and gentleness,
With love and purity and tenderness,
That he who sees her cannot ever swerve
From loving her; and only to deserve
Her smile would swim a sea of bitterness:
Her very words the listener seem to bless,
And break the bondage of his soul's reserve;

And, through the mellowed lightning of her eye,
Shine forth great secrets of affection,
Making all those who see her glad thereby:
With gracious skill she helps each slow defection
So that each loving soul is fain to sigh:
Lead me, sweet Lady, in thy own direction.

CLXII.

WHEN palsied autumn shakes the yellow trees,
And robs the meadow of its wonted green,
And happy birds that once would sing and preen
Their painted feathers in the coppices,
Now hide from chilly winds that 'gin to freeze
The verdant broidery of summer's sheen,
And that which was is as it had not been;
From outward things, which may no longer please,
I shift thy semblance, and, in fairer shows
That dwell within the soul, discern thy face;
And when the piping blast of winter blows,
Make new acquaintance with thy fresh-clad grace,
Breathing o'er barren fields and wasteful snows
The balm of springtide with its hymns of praise.

CLXIII.

A SUIT.

FAIR Lady, if thy heart be warm
And true as doth beseem
The fine transcendence of that form
Unto my ravished dream—

(Although no dream may ever bound,
Or visioned fancy hold,
Those treasured lips of silver sound,
Those tresses of pure gold)—

Transfigured by thy sunlike face,
Let me rejoice to find
Amongst thy satellites a place,
Sped by a willing mind.

Whenas I stood perplext, forlorn,
Thy graces did but yield
A chillness like the breath of morn
Blown on a wintry field.

Though if my life had not been dark,
And hope trailed in the dust,
Love had not found a worthier mark,
Nor faith a surer trust.

Yet now my soul doth breathe the air
Where thy perfections move,
Oh, bid my forward hope despair,
Or humble suit to love:

Nor let me, blinded through thy light,
Go dark in open day:
But teach me how to woo thee right,
Or drive me quite away.

CLXIV.

THY beauteous face is Love's sweet argument;
So fair it beams amidst a world of gloom:
Its glories to each wondering spirit bloom
And take the gentle heart with ravishment.
Thy brightness doth outshine heaven's firmament,
And light the sable margin of the tomb.
Whoever enters once thy heart's fair room
Shall find his widest yearning's complement.
Thy thoughts are fragments of the Eternal Mind:
Clear memories and lofty hopes that bless,
Like odours May-born breezes leave behind
From banks of violets and primroses:
Fresh gleams that come and go like summer wind:
The interior wealth of settled quietness.

CLXV.

OH, tell me not that I should be dismayed,
Or faint, transfixèd by your potent skill;
Or that your too bright fires my soul should kill,
Sweet eyes which for a nobler part are made;
But rather, by your clearest light arrayed
And inward flame, my high enkindled will
May strive to gain the holy realm and still
Wherein your sacred beams with Love are laid:
Not burned in fierce desire's incendiary;
But softened by the rule of best content,
And drawing from your depths such harmony

May serve to smooth a world by discord bent,
Leading the soul by gracious ways and high
To that pure place from which your power is lent.

CLXVI.

TO TRUTH.

NOT Love's respect nor Beauty's monument
Can match the assured glory of the time
When I have sat sole arbiter, sublime,
Above the sable years' sad discontent,
Wrapt in the sphere of thy large argument;
Nor holds the fine surprise of poet's rhyme,
Nor green sufficiencies of summer prime,
Such teeming treasure of outpoured content:
For I have proved, beyond the world's demerit,
A stablished dwelling wherein find a home
The broodings of the vast Eternal Spirit,
Melting the limits of this mortal doom;
Rich hours whose contemplative moods inherit
Prophetic joy, a weight of peace to come.

CLXVII.

THE FREEMAN'S SONG.

Libertà va cercando.
DANTE.

THE worldling's wealth, the statesman's power,
The placeman's pride, the phantom fires
Of fame—that darling of an hour:
These fill not my enlarged desires;
Nor feed those appetites divine
That lead me with the gods to dine.

Of horse and hound I have no care,
No liveried servants on me wait;
I take no count of silk and vair,
Nor wish for gauds of gilded state,
Nor feasts with costly viands spread,
By servile flatteries seasonèd.

The garish pomp, the sparkling show,
The golden shackles of the slave,
The lordly ease that doth not know
The cares of men, I do not crave;
Nor hang my calmer soul's delight
On dance and revelry by night.

No stormy passions tear me down
With restless fiends of fell remorse;
Nor in the senses' dungeon thrown
Would I bleed out the spirit's force:
But let my chartered soul be free
To breathe the air of liberty:—

To drink the mountain spring; to roam
From land to land, and still to find
In every place a happy home,
And friendly hearts in all mankind;
To take the gifts by Heaven sent
With gratitude and rich content:

In sunny climes, by deep blue seas,
With slow and thoughtful steps to rove;
Or, lying underneath the trees
Of some remote and ancient grove,
To hear the winds above me sighing,
And silvery waterfalls replying:

To float in joy the crystal sphere
  Of summer dawns through hyaline,
Of such translucent atmosphere
  As clears the soul to thoughts divine,
And bears it up through airy dreams
To that which is from that which seems:

To stand amidst the splintered spires
  And scattered fragments of the earth;
To watch the blazing sunset fires,
  Fanned by fierce roarings of the north,
Fade from sharp peaks whose jaggèd lines
Are ridged with plumes of blackened pines:

From sunny smiles and rainy tears,
  From rough and smooth to reap and hold
Rich harvests of the ripening years,
  Whose treasure is of better gold;
To walk the world content and free
With this my guardian Liberty.

CLXVIII.

THE RULES OF A RIGHT LIFE.

THROUGH joy and sorrow wouldst thou thrive:
  To loftiest purpose rightly live;
Gaining the best that life can give,

Hold upright thought and act thy rule
Through wealth and want, and go to school
Where Reason sits in judgment cool.

An honest purpose stoutly borne,
And like a well-knit garment worn,
Which you may out or inwards turn.

Religion not composed of sighs,
Nor made of captious subtleties;
But raised through loving sympathies.

A patriotism born and spent
Most chiefly in self-government,
Whereby the public good is meant.

True wisdom bred not on the lip,
Nor mere extent of scholarship;
But that which through the heart grows ripe.

A rectitude which swerveth not:
Which seeks and finds—if that its lot
Be rough or smooth—the self-same spot:

Which anchors not on shifting ground:
And though it hear the billows sound,
Securely mocks the fierce rebound.

A count of time as only lent,
Like glebe, to be repaid in rent:
The heaviest loss a day misspent.

Strong energy that never tires,
Fed by those bright eternal fires
Born in a mind of high desires.

A will that knows no other law
Than that which from itself doth draw;
And only holds its God in awe.

So large a sense of truth within,
That asks not any crown to win,
Nor cares for praise of men a pin:

But for itself doth hold itself
Its own reward: untouched by pelf:
Setting opinion on the shelf.

Firm faith in that large Law which guides
This mortal life and rules its tides
With Love that evermore abides.

Peace laid in pure desires and high:
Rich in a plain simplicity:
Not dulled by blunt satiety.

Contentment, too, which doth befit
One who upon a throne would sit
Above the world and govern it.

Unselfishness which rather lies
In what it holds than what it is;
Filled with divine sufficiencies:

Which would resign its best desire,
And sit down gladly in the mire
To raise the truth a little higher.

Opinion which by readiest choice
Doth in the good it finds rejoice;
Nor listens to detraction's voice.

High poetries which hold no strife
With healthy labour, child and wife:
Right offspring of a well-spent life.

Ambition which so low doth fly,
It asks no other luxury
Than sunshine and sweet liberty.

A tranquil manner—rather, none—
Which counts its proper praise alone
The good of others: not its own.

He who at such a height doth live,
Through joy and sorrow he shall thrive,
Having the best that life can give.

CLXIX.

MUSING one day, I weighed the mystery
Of human life in this so various state.
From port to port I saw the fortunate
Blown by fair breezes under clearest sky;
Whilst others, wrecked in utter misery,
Struggled in vain against the rule of Fate.
I saw the good man fall, the bad grow great;
And all the glory of the wise pass by;

And, through the changing course of race and blood,
Ambition, wrong and avarice abound.
Thus wandering by the borders of a wood
A rustic homestead twined with flowers I found:
And thought, how to these simple hearts and good
Such questionings might prove but airy sound.

CLXX.

THE REALITY OF GOODNESS.

THINK not, because the treasure of thy good
In converse circumstance might perhaps have been
No good at all, that it is poor or mean
For lack of unconditioned certitude.
Is he who gains his strength from daily food
Less strong because the subtle fang and keen
Of gaunt-ribbed hunger might have made him lean,
Caught on the sands of Afric's latitude?
Be sure, our being's worth rests in possession:
Not in potential possibilities
Of forced alternatives that find no session
Within the soul's unstretched infinities.
Of this apparent truth I make confession;
For some have erred, not seeing where it lies.

CLXXI.

THE SOUL'S DAWN.

HOW happy is it, when the mind hath dwelt
In a drear region, cold and bleak and bare,
Where fogs and mists obscure the heavy air,
And life itself seems bound as with a belt
Of steel: no ray of wished-for sun to melt
The astringent chillness—cloak of all things fair,
Blanching the splendour which we know is there,
Invisible, near us,—and the beam is felt
Of a new light that glimmers from the shore
Of farthest being—dawn of grateful birth,
Welcome as bright, which grows from more to more,
Until we see, lit by its glow, the worth
And raise a throne of that which lay before
Crushing the spirit with a weight of earth!

CLXXII.

Behold the fowls of the air.
Consider the lilies of the field.
SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

THE LORD OF LIGHT, whose bounteous gift hath crowned
Man with a part of his own majesty,
Would not that he should lack the quality,
His attribute no less, of love profound

For the least thing that in the world is found;
Nor pass as worthless smallest blossom by;
Nor leave the thin cloud of the summer sky
Unnoticed, on its proper mission bound:
For sometimes even a flower or bird may serve
For guide to lead him to the Just and Best;
And, when from lofty course his soul would swerve,
Help him to hold to what is true and blest,
Help him to combat sin with giant nerve
Whom God would gather to his perfect rest.

CLXXIII.

OPPORTUNITY.

WHEN barren hours crush down the drooping Muse,
Blinding its fine perceptions, and the earth
To no exalted energies gives birth,
And rivers all their eloquence refuse,
And skies are dark, and flowers their fragrance lose,
And all Life's best seems dust and nothing worth;
Let trust and patience rule the present dearth:
Force not thy mood against its proper dues:—
Then, when it brings its batch of glowing gold,
By power of fine afflatus fed and fann'd,
Smite; spare not; beat; lay heavy on; nor hold
Until the growing form beneath thy hand
Unfold itself and take the finished mould
Of all thy loftiest thinkings may command.

CLXXIV.

TORTURED by fierce experiences: consumed
Through fiery ordeal of implacable years:
Shut out from hope: beset with pains and fears;
Pierced by sharp thorns where roses should have bloomed:
Thy buried pangs exhumed and rëexhumed:
Without a single thought or sight that cheers:—
How sad thy bitter lot! yet he who steers
His bark above the grave where lie entombed
In Time's deep sea, the fruits of vain desire,
Blighted ere ripe, may hold a nobler way:
And though rough storms about his course may fire
Their thunderbolts, and waves and winds may play
With his frail vessel like a toy, yet higher
Than storm and cloud and wind shall rise his day.

CLXXV.

BURDENS.

SIX things there are which weigh my spirit down—
Yea, seven for which my soul doth sorely sigh:
A purse-proud man who, raised from low to high,
His former friends and neighbours doth disown:
A statesman who would use for stepping-stone
His nation's rights and wrongs, to rise thereby
To power: a merchant scribbler who doth cry
All noble sentiments, yet lives in none:

The staunch reformer who would have the world
A triangle, and he the broadest base:
A preacher perfumed, oiled and gloved and curled,
Preaching his own, stone-blind to heaven's grace:
A gifted soul on storms of passion whirled:
A cruel heart veiled by a beauteous face.

CLXXVI.

MOORINGS.

LET not thy good's lost opportunity
Remake the sibyl's bargain. Wear the stole
Of honest candour. Dwell in thy own soul:
Nor place thy peace and life's prosperity
In others' keeping. Watch continually
Thy inward movements, and their course control
To finest issues. Strive to grasp the whole
Vast wealth of Love's unknown immensity.
Be ruler of thy own domain within.
Hoard thy best treasure of serene content
Bastioned in Truth. Count deedless words as sin.
Each day build up a lofty monument
Of nobly purposed life not wasted in
The barren confines of unproved intent.

CLXXVII.

THE DEGENERACY OF THE TIMES.

CUSTOM and fashion so have crippled us,
That now we stumble in the good old way
Where honour once, and truest virtue lay;
By love of wealth, and fame, and evil use

Misled and blinded. Simpleness doth lose
Her gentle port and costume: cold decay
Freezes the faith that once could think and pray
In humble trust: contentment doth refuse
The homely path: no memory survives
Of that sweet Life and grand, without a flaw,
In which all wisdom, love and courage blend:
Ignoble aims environ us: our lives
No more, attuned to th' everlasting law,
Move in majestic march to glorious end.

CLXXVIII.

COOL evening shadows through the gardens steal;
The labourer hies him home, his day's work o'er,
Whilst women gossip at each cottage door,
Or turn, with cheerful song, the spinning-wheel;
Through bowery lanes the laden wagons reel
Drawn by white oxen; trees droop with rich store
Of golden fruit, or strew the blossomed floor:
Yet midst this peace and beauty I would feel
That toil and grief and pain maintain their power;
Nor be of that emasculated throng
To whom bare truth is but a plaything flower,
And cries of suffering and want and wrong
But the pathetic pastime of an hour;
The tender wording of a sweet-set song.

Ravenna, August 1868.

CLXXIX.

WORTH OF PERSISTENCY.

HOW many a flower hath grown from leaf to bud
And died unblown and withered up in drouth!
How many a day born of the limpid south
Hath quenched its evening light in storm and flood!
Sometimes a moment's chill hath starved a brood;
And ships, unscathed through every wind that blow'th,
Have sunk at last, wrecked at the harbour mouth.
Thus may we see there is no earthly good
That long abides in stedfast certainty;
And thus, in all our course it doth behove
To keep the way with keen and watchful eye:
For so misfortunes darkly round us move
And hold their course through earth and sea and sky:
But he walks well whose lamp and guide is Love.

CLXXX.

GOOD WISHES.

YE who have proved the worth of simple pleasure,
Take my good wishes that ye may be wise
To seize the fruitful Present ere it flies:
May all your golden days of thoughtful leisure

Bring nights of peace earth's glory cannot measure—
Sweet sleep and happy dreams, and then to rise
Waked by warm sunshine from clear morning skies:
And from each season, wealth of countless treasure—
As spring's first flowers and autumn's last; with downs
Of velvet grass to walk on: purling brooks
That make their pleasant noise amongst the stones:
Well-shaded woods and open vales beside:
With grief's two best consolers, friends and books:
And in the wintertime a bright fireside.

CLXXXI.

AGAINST PEDANTRY.

MISPRIZE him not whose unrhymed poetries
Hold not the measured limits of thy school,
By sweet domestic custom, social rule,
Bound to a life of homelier sympathies;
Nor think those flights thy prouder genius tries
Confer the right to call the meanest, fool,
Whose sober spirit dwells in judgment cool,
And life is laid in pure simplicities:
For not in shade of academic trees
Man's loftiest being is attained alone,
Nor sealed the charter of the time's release;
But through a humbler range of act is won:
The daily toil, the calm content, the peace
Which flows from simple duties rightly done.

CLXXXII.

NATURE'S MESSENGER.

GO, flitting plume of dandelion down,
Across the meadow, passing by the mill;
Nor pause amongst the pastures on the hill;
On wings of scented zephyrs lightly blown,
Until thou reach the dim and smoky town;
Nor let the narrow street obstruct thy will;
Then drop upon the weathered window sill
Of the sad sempstress by hard toil foredone,
And tell her of the vale that once she knew
Through which the babbling streamlet used to pass,
Of morning meadows grey with pearls of dew,
The rushy pool of dark and liquid glass,
The summer sky—a boundless world of blue,
Of orchards old, and fields knee-deep in grass.

CLXXXIII.

ON A MOUNTAIN STREAM.

HAPPY the bard who on a summer's day
Should track thee from thy source of alders green,
Bright streamlet, where dew-spotted flowers are seen
Trembling for pleasure at thy joyous play,
Companions and fast-friends from early May!
O'er many a crystal shallow he shall lean,
Watching the circling wavelets quivering sheen
Shatter the pebbles of the paven bay;

And as thy sinuous course his slow steps wind,
He shall be shaded with a thicker growth,
And fairer blossoms greet him—more and more:
Like sweet surprises poets sometimes find
At feeling in a larger force a truth
Expressed, but never known so true, before.

CLXXXIV.

THE UNDERSHINE.

BEYOND the brightness of the farthest star
Hast thou not ever felt another light
Was struggling with a radiance more bright
To pierce the limits of thy mortal bar?
That, wrapt in beauty of the summer air
In flower and cloud and distant mountain height,
Another beauty strove to meet thy sight:
A spiritual splendour lovelier far?
Not in the wastes of lean desire unfed
Shall he who proves life's noblest greatness groan,
Whose soul on Truth and Love hath banquetted:
To him the secret glory shall be shown,
And substance of the actual world be spread
With colours borrowed from the spirit's own.

CLXXXV.

TO A HEDGEROW FLOWER.

> To me the meanest flower that blows can give
> Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.
> WORDSWORTH.

TO one an anchorite in Nature's cell,
Who holds himself a votary at her shrine,
She hath no worthier history to tell
Than that is written on that face of thine.

Even I, the careless dreamer of an hour,
Can hardly pass such tender beauty by;
Or fail to see within thy fringèd flower
The softened glory of an angel's eye.

It seems as if thy perfume might recall
To waning age the joy of young desires:
Bright dreams of youth to gild Time's silvered fall,
And light the filmy eye with vanished fires.

Child of tempestuous winds and beating showers,
Of hopes long buried through the winter's cold,
Who could have thought that from those freezing hours
Such fragile graces might themselves unfold?

Down in the bosom of thy velvet cup
Mysterious visions seem to come and go:
Frail semblances of many a perished hope;
Dismantled idols of the Long Ago;

Low-hanging plumes of grey ancestral woods;
The ferngrown pathway through the coppice rank;
Rich scents of hawthorn and fresh April buds
Strewing each sloping mead and sunny bank;

Calm rivers flowing through broad plains of grass,
Whereover hang white heaps of curling cloud;
Blue wreaths of smoke which through the elm trees pass;
The rushing stream; the mill-wheel clacking loud;

Ethereal ministrations of the spring;
The full abundance of green summer-time;
Those messages the feathered songsters bring,
With music sweeter than the poet's rhyme;

Faint motions which stern Reason's self control;
Dark hints and vagrant intimations given,
As of a hidden soul within the soul
Of earthly things—high witnesses of heaven;

The echoed murmur of a much loved name;
The Beauty sought for long, but never found;
The pale reflection of an unseen flame;
Thin waves of splendour vaguely floating round.—

Dreams! Yes they are but dreams, for Beauty flies,
Whilst Love still lingers burning with desire
Upon the threshold of its Paradise
Touched with the glory of its sacred fire,

And sees the borders of a wondrous land
Where gorgeous mornings gild the glowing spheres;
And hears bright angels sing on every hand
Outside the limits of these mortal years:

A world whose perfect beauty far transcends
Our vision—the beatitude of seeing:
A music whose majestic roll extends
Beyond our ears—the harmony of being:

Yet even these glimmerings of ungarnered bliss
A sanctifying power and glory give,
Infusing loftier hopes and thoughts in this
Dim world in which we suffer and we live.

So let me lean above thy radiant face,
And from thy sweets fresh inspirations cull,
Which claim their portioned heritage of grace
With those pure souls whom Love makes beautiful.

May 1868.

CLXXXVI.

THE drip of raindrops through grey olive trees:
The evening wind that breathes its soft replies
In tenderest tones and silvery symphonies:
A sombre cypress bending to the breeze;
And, on the distant hills, a snowy fleece
Of vagrant cloud dropt from translucent skies
Beyond the glittering valley's thousand dyes.-
Blest is he who amongst such scenes as these

Lingers in calm communion free from blame,
Bearing amidst the worldly hum and stir
The holy ardour of a sacred flame—
Light of the Good, pure Beauty's minister:
High energies and habits born of them
That aggregate the noble character.

Assisi, July 1868.

CLXXXVII.

AMONGST THE APENNINES.

BRIDE of the Morning! Valley warm and low:
Thou precious gem of all the Apennine
Decked with the glory of some costly shrine,
Grace of a gorgeous dome: what verse may flow
So deftly as thy murmuring stream doth go,
Singing with tender strain to oak and pine;
Or yonder maiden's song whose fingers twine
Thread from a distaff where smooth sward doth grow,
Tending her flock that specks the shadowy dell?
Well might some world-worn wanderer pause and say,
Listing the wind and brooklet fall and swell,—
A pensive pilgrim through life's troubled day,—
Here let me with sweet Contemplation dwell
Until these mortal spoils shall fall away.

Near Nuocera, July 1868.

CLXXXVIII.

ON THE WALLS.

THE grey old campaniles of the town,
O'er which the failing day his light hath flung,
Watch round, ere yet the vesper hath been rung,
As, loitering on these walls of crumbling stone,
I gaze on garden-hollows overblown
With flowers, and wreaths of golden fruitage strung
From tree to tree, and grapes in bunches hung:
So rich, so full, the spirit longs to disown
Its weight of burdensome mortality,
And plunge, as from an ocean-belted stage
Of rock, deep down, and like a triton be;
Through the cool billows of the verdant sea,
And rustling of the surging foliage,
Breasting the waves of blossomed greenery.

Ravenna, August 1868.

CLXXXIX.

EXPECTATION.

AS when a woman, ere her child be born,
Tells o'er each possible feature, spells each grace
That may lie written on its innocent face,
Anticipates its sex, and, to adorn
Its baby limbs, prepares what shall be worn;
And even sees its smiles and tender ways
Twining her very soul in their embrace,
The dear foreshadowings of the happy morn

When it shall see the light: so, like to her,
Have I looked for the glory of thy dawn
Sweet Spirit that hidest from the thoughtless stir,
Song of the ocean, Praise of field and lawn,
Shadow of God, the wide world's Minister,—
Waiting until thy veil shall be withdrawn.

CXC.

GOLDEN MOMENTS.

WHEN sweetest moods with fairest prospects meet,
And busy Fancy decks the world with flowers
Plucked in a land untinged by cares of ours,
Where souls, like childhood's angels, smile and greet;
And blessèd sunshine feeds, with tempered heat,
From open skies, new blossoms through the bowers
Touched by the spirit's glory; whilst the Hours
Their airy dance with joyous footsteps beat;
And all the good of life seems crowded in
A few short moments:—take them unto thee;
Drink deeply; grasp them closely; hide them where
Thy being flows: for they may have to win
A little gleam through days of gloom, and be
The clearest stars that light long nights of care.

CXCI.

THE POET'S AMBITION.

THE silvery sound of summer-breathing wind
That sings its faint division through the trees;
The slow, white cloud that sails before the breeze;
A heaven whose worst inclemencies are kind;
A plain simplicity that doth unbind
The soul of liberty in temperate ease:
Be these my wealth, my dear companions these,
With sweet society of those who find
New power in ancient forces, and discern
The wider meaning; whose high thoughts transcend
All visible things; ennobled souls that yearn
To leave the sensuous coil and apprehend
Fresh motions in the sun and moon and learn
To point with loftier aim Life's proper end.

CXCII.

HOW fresh the new day on the fields doth lie,
Trailing a little mist along the dells,
Wakened by tinklings of clear morning bells
And rills that leap and fall most musically!
White villa, spreading pine and cypress high,
Convent and castle crown the upland swells,
To yon blue range that nearest heaven dwells.—
Enough the weaving of a tender sky;
A broken arch whereon the sunshine lies;
A red-tiled gable hung with fruited vine,
To make a world of pure content to one

Whose heart is filled with Nature's sympathies,
And spirit chorded with her music fine:
So little serves to hang his mood upon!

Siena, October 1868.

CXCIII.

THE FALLEN LEAF.

THAT fallen leaf that lies ith' autumn sun
Is touched with brighter hues than when it swung
Amongst its green companion-leaves and sung
To the sweet west as June's warm day was done:
And who shall say that it may not have won
A tiny sense of duties filled, though flung
Down from the sapless branch to which it clung?
Just as *our* lives the Past may well atone
By gentle touch of years that bring the mind
Calm thoughts and lovely visions of their prime
Through power of joy and sorrow so refined
And sanctified, that, in the abysm of Time,
Youth's finest jewels, long since left behind,
Shine like the stars in yonder heaven sublime.

CXCIV.

ON THE GRASS.

PRISMATIC dewdrops take the morning ray,
Like vary-coloured jewels, sharp and bright:
Each pensile blade reflects a point of light
And throws a shade where busy emmets stray:

Circling empurpled whorls, the small flies play:
The dandelion's calyx, bald and white,
With twisted sepals withered, stands upright,
Its parachutes of down all blown away:
A filmy gossamer, like nothingness
Made visible on sheen of dancing rills,
Just gleams and vanishes. Such blessedness—
Even a burden of deep joy—fulfils
The air, that Thought itself is motionless
As a white cloud that sleeps in summer hills.

Siena, October 1868.

CXCV.

O LAND of blessedness compact
In yonder crystal skies,
Where, wedded to the world of fact,
The world of spirit lies,

What sacred fountains vitalize
With gushing streams of light
Thy glorious deeps to symbolize
The day beyond the night!

Thrice happy he, who drinking in
That light no more may pine:
Whose raptured spirit fails within,
Absorbed and lost in thine.

Rome, January 1867.

CXCVI.

GIVE me no paltry crown of earth,
Or crown me with its scorn;
Whose honour is of empty worth,
Whose love of lust is born.
Its praises, power, wealth and ease,
Its fierce delights: I ask not these.

Let me but grasp the life sublime
Of those fine souls of old,
Who spurned the slavery of time,
And were not bought and sold;
Whose piercing flight outsoared earth's dim,
Cold vapours; fledgling cherubim.

Thus like an eagle filled with light,
When this world's day is done,
Give me to cleave the clouds of night,
And flap the blazing sun:
A spirit steeped in stainless dew,
To meet the morning fair and new.

CXCVII.

WOULDST thou know what 'tis I win
By my earnest soul's desire:
What these fervid yearnings mean
Wheeling like celestial fire;
If I truly feel in this
All my being wasted is;
Missing every worldly bliss?

Floating on their seas of flame;
Tossed in anguish though I move,
Yet they bear me still the same
To a land whose light is love,
On whose shores these waves of fire
Break and gloriously expire
In the end of all desire.

CXCVIII.

TO A NOBLE SOUL.

STARS through the primal midnight peering down
Into the deep abyss of human tears
Burn not so bright within their fiery spheres,
Nor sweep the skies in mightier cycles blown
By God's breath, circling his established throne,
Whose stedfast bases underlie the years:—
For, putting by the freight of mortal fears
And weight of earth, thy spirit thou hast thrown
Wrapt in a flaming robe of adoration,
In awe, before the wondrous Trinity
Of Thought and Act and blessèd Contemplation
Stretching through limitless infinity;
The vast Soul shrined within its own creation:
Temple of Love, true Praise of the Divinity.

CXCIX.

LO! yonder oak whose branches loved to spread
Their generous shade through all the sunny time,
When amorous birds sang many a gallant rhyme,
And winds were hushed, and blue skies overhead;

Although its summer pride is witherèd
Yet still around its sapless trunk—sublime
Even in decay—thick wreaths of ivy climb,
Green as the leafy glory it has shed:
Thus, when the good man's life on earth is past,
About his memory souls distraught shall cling,
Finding support through many a stormy blast,
And round his deathless name fresh garlands bring;
That so his noble virtues may outlast
The tomb, and make this life a sweeter thing.

CC.

FAITH AND WORKS.

THE man who doth his charity dispense,
Whether of words or gifts or helpful ways,
In order that his soul shall find more grace
At last, and earn a better recompence;
Or but as duty of large competence;
And not to help the suffering and to raise
The low, without a thought of gain or praise
Here or hereafter, still is tombed in sense.
So he, whose love to God hath but the root
Of his soul's safety: not that in his eye
God is more lovely than his attribute;
It seems to me, unto his soul doth lie.
Live thou with Christ: let those who will dispute
Of Faith and Works and their 'Necessity.'

CCI.

AN AFTERNOON AT CHURCH.

THE dead leaves whirled and fluttered in the blast,
Scattered in showers through the miry lane:
The dripping hedgerows stretched a blackened chain
From field to field, blurred at the distant waste:
The yew tree's arms about the graves were cast:
Blinding the dim light of the glimmering pane
Beat the cold deluge of November rain:
The short and dreary day was dying fast
From where the grim old warriors slept in stone,
Palm pressed to palm: the tattered banners waved:
The mottoed saints ith' window seemed to nod
And shiver as the furious tempest raved.
'Soul,' cried the preacher from his pulpit-throne
With solemn voice, 'Prepare to meet thy God.'

CCII.

DEATH KING.

THE vain respites of earthly good
Pass in the passing of a day;
Or like a flower that cleaves the hood,
Then falleth soon to swift decay:
The crown corrodes upon the brow:
A puff, and breath itself doth go.

The proud ambition of the great
But labours to itself enslave:
The noise and show of varnished state
Do only seek a dusty grave;
A little while they boast their round,
Till Death doth lay them in the ground.

He steals away the loving kiss:
He draws the laugh: he stops the sigh:
He quenches Pleasure in its bliss:
Even Misery's self must cease to cry,
And silently resign its breath,
Hushed by the lullaby of Death.

O mighty conqueror, dread king!
All earthly rule bows at thy word:
To thee all nations tribute bring,
And doughtiest warriors yield the sword:
Thy banner floats through Time unfurled;
For thou art monarch of the world.

CCIII.

ALTHOUGH thy darkened road lead through the tombs,
Yet bear thee trustfully and stedfastly:
Seek not thy good through evil ways; nor try
To imp a devil's wing with angel plumes.
Good is sufficient for itself, and comes
Of God, though sensuous tongues may give the lie;
And knows its own to crown and justify,
Inducing, through harsh strifes and troubled glooms,

The motions of an inward power that makes
Life but the orbing of well ordered law;
And from the elements of dust awakes
Those fructifying properties which draw
Fresh flowers amidst its arid thorns and brakes,
Loading with golden grain its barren straw.

CCIV.

IF, sometimes pondering this mortal state,
You ask why Right should bear the name of right,
Seeing that one vast Hand with sovran might
Made all the world, and Wisdom cannot bate
One jot of all her work, nor abrogate
A single law once made: yet to requite
That law she holds another in despite;
'Thou shalt and shalt not,' saying, 'Love and hate';
And seems as if herself she did confound
Herself with arbitrary overrule:
Remember that the answer is not found
Within those acts themselves, or in the school
Of this or that philosophy; but bound
Broadly in this: Shall Sense or Reason rule?

CCV.

DOING AND BEING.

THINK not alone to *do* right and fulfil
Life's due perfection by the simple worth
Of lawful actions called by justice forth,
And thus condone a world confused with ill;

But fix the high condition of thy will
To *be* right, that its good's spontaneous birth
May spread like flowers springing from the earth
On which the natural dews of heaven distil:
For these require no honours, take no care
For gratitude from men; but more are blest
In the sweet ignorance that they are fair,
And through their proper functions live and rest,
Breathing their fragrance on the joyous air,
Content with praise of bettering what is best.

CCVI.

LIMITATIONS.

NOT in undue expansion lies
The art of living well,
But in the strength to dwell
Within the lines of measured boundaries.
The cloud that floats the skies
Must vanish if it grow in size.
Yet let not Circumstance its limitations draw
With iron shackles round thee, but the Inward Law
Of powers restricted to definèd end
Teach thee how chastened Thought with rightful
Act may blend.

CCVII.

PRECEPTS.

HOLD fashion as thy slave, and not thy lord.
Rule well thyself, nor seek with hasty feet
To govern others. Let thy pulses beat
To Heaven's own music. Grasp the unsheathed sword
Of Truth, and vindicate the Eternal Word.
Give each his recognition, fair and meet:
(The rose is good to smell, and not to eat.)
Live loftily, and let thy soul afford
A council room for angels. Dwell in peace.
Find in continual good thy heaven and crown;
Claiming no guerdon. Shun effeminate ease.
Despise the life that only seeks its own.
Let riches rot, sunk in Lethean seas:
So shall thy path with nobler gems be strown.

CCVIII.

TRUE HAPPINESS.

IF to be cheated of the passing time
Were happiness, we might affirm it lay
In strained delights that vex the serious day
With mirth, until the slow, sad moon doth climb
The heavens outwearied with loud laughter's chime:
But noisy joys are swift to pass away:
True happiness is queen of wider sway,
Sitting upon a stedfast throne sublime;

Her gifts are finer, and her glories won
From poring into heavenly mysteries
Through quiet hours of contemplation
Within a world of virtuous energies
Lighted by God himself as moon and sun—
Accordant link of both Eternities.

CCIX.

SUPEREROGATIONS.

SOLDIERS and champions of the Just and True,
Who strive to reach the goal of utmost good,
Press not with over-strained solicitude,
For inward praise or Heaven's reward to do
By self-set labours more than doth ensue
From a clear sense of simple rectitude
With useful end and purposed aim pursued:
But let your good fall like the evening dew
On thirsty roses—naturally fall:
For if it bear not its reward within
Itself it hath no other praise at all.
The selfish energies that seek to win
Gain in the doing are but as the pall
That cloaks a lifeless form of specious sin.

CCX.

THE MISSION.

GO forth my song among the subtle ways
Of men, and bear thee witness of their lies.
Tell flatterers that they shall cease from praise:
Tell golden princes that their bravery dies:

Tell wealth that all its honour is disgrace:
Tell beauty that it is corruption's prize:
Tell pleasure that it holds a short-lived place:
Tell passion that it is but made of sighs:
Tell glory that it banquets on the wind:
Tell fancy that it mocks the name of love:
Tell policy that it is deaf and blind:
Tell haughty youth how swiftly age doth move:—
And then, when thou hast told them all thy mind,
Return to me in peace, like Noah's dove.

CCXI.

THE MEAN.

SOME perish through excess of wealth, and some
Waste in the arms of meagre poverty:
Some overworn, some clasped in sloth do die;
Through hunger death to many more doth come;
Whilst others overgorged do find their tomb:
'Twixt heaven and earth the bird that flies must fly:
Between two gulfs of blank eternity
This mortal being holds its narrow home:
Nor heat nor cold the budding rose doth swell,
But temperate mean its subtle hues invest.
So may we know the middle course is best,
And all existence only possible
Between two fierce extremes within whose breast
The elements of sure destruction dwell.

CCXII.

THE TORRENT.

WHEN through the Soul's wide realm, slow growth of years,
Down from the Rocks no mortal foot may climb
Vast torrents rush in curbless course sublime,
Sweeping away the crops its harvest bears,
Fruit of long toil and care and anxious tears;
Fair-fashioned idols, demi-gods of Time;
And gilded temples symbols of its prime,—
Watch calmly, undisturbed by mortal fears,
Until the flood be past; then, searching well
The oozy floor where once the billows rose,
Amongst the ruin thou mayst find a shell
Whose voice shall to thy listening ear disclose
The secrets of the sea-girt Citadel
Round which those turbulent waters now repose.

CCXIII.

CONCENTRATION.

GATHER your aims in one, nor be content
To rove in errant by-roads here and there,
Although your step be firm and pathway fair,
And somewhat of a gracious light be lent
To individual acts. Hues deftly blent
To ordered purpose brighter beauties wear.
Nor let your course the wayward breezes steer,
Like yonder cloud that floats the firmament,

Touching each cape and jutting promontory—
The wavering shadow of a vagrant Hope
Which knows no anchorage from morn to morn;
But, ever wandering with uncertain scope,
Leans on its present self, a Hope forlorn:
A wrecked ship lost upon a sea of glory.

CCXIV.

POWER OF FAITH.

MAJESTIC spirits, learn, as ye sphere-like roll,
That not by stern dictates of iron will,
Nor high resolve alone, can man fulfil
Life's proper destiny, or attain the goal
That crowns the noble course of a true soul;
But by a lofty faith, through good and ill,
In the great Power and Love, prime essence still
Of the least particle as of the whole.
By faith the sun shines and the moon is bright:
By faith the trees grow and the seasons bloom:
By faith the earth renews its day and night:
By faith the stars turn and their lamps relume:
By faith man rises to a world of Light,
Cleaving the solid darkness of the tomb.

CCXV.

SIENA CATHEDRAL.

BLESSED be the heads that planned and hands that reared
This noble structure and its marvels wrought
Impressed with loving skill and lofty thought;
Each touch a step to yearning minds endeared,
By which their high ideal may be neared,
And some grand lesson well and subtly taught
Through cunning forms of beauty gently brought
As messages whereby their lives are cheered,
And inmost souls concentred in a watch
More earnest, fixed beyond their narrow house;—
All earthly sounds hushed to their raptured ears;—
Leaning from dull mortality to catch
The keynote of a life more glorious
Lived by the angels in their shining spheres.

September 1868.

CCXVI.

NATURE'S SERMONS.

GREAT truths hath Nature for her children spread
Wherever streams may flow or branches toss.
All round this leafy glade she doth ingross
Clear characters by thoughtful musings read:—
Fear not the cavil of the world's upbraid,
Nor count thyself much victor through its loss;
Seeing its brightest gold is but as dross,
And shallow joys with grief are underlaid:

Seek thou through humbleness the simple ways
Of truth unstained by any vain desire;
So shalt thou surely find thy rightful place;
Nor heed, though poisoned tongues which do not tire,
Should hold the soul of thine appointed grace
But slandered abject to the general liar.

CCXVII.

CAIN.

PALE as the moonset of a wintry morn,
When swooning stars reel down the eastern sky,
He wanders, Cain the cursèd, wearily,
By rocky ways beset with many a thorn—
Dun lengths of stretching wilderness. Forlorn
Winds gasp and sob: the woods moan drearily,
As, sinking on the leaves to sleep, or die,
Gnawed by internal serpents, sick, forworn,
He dreams, and in his dream a bleeding Form
Bends over him, and asks with accents bland:
What hast thou, brother, on thy throbbing brow?
Then starting up aghast, roused by a storm
Of anguished throes, he feels the burning brand
Consume his brain and sense with fiery glow.

CCXVIII.

DISAPPOINTMENT.

I THOUGHT to find a little truth and trust
In all the world, and that its cup might hold
Some drops of warm sincerity, though cold
The hand that pressed it, soiled with earthly dust;

And, through the tainted outward of its rust,
Propped by a strong desire, my Hope was bold
To count upon a little ore of gold
Wrapt in the foldings of its sordid crust:
But now I find its deepest love is scorn,
The transient sunshine of a changeful state;
And all its glory but a shade forlorn
Which on the passing shows of time doth wait;
And Hope, a weary beggar wan and worn,
Sits, veiled in sadness, shivering at the gate.

CCXIX.

UNREST.

When I lie down I say, When shall I arise and the night be gone? and I am full of tossings to and fro unto the dawning of the day.—JOB.

THE night grows on from dark to dark:
My soul within me has no rest:
Through weariness and gloom I mark
The beating of a heart oppressed
With heavy sorrow. Then I pray:
When shall this dreadful darkness go?
I am full of tossings to and fro
Unto the dawning of the day.

The troubled winds wail round and moan,
Matching my grief with doleful sighs.
The hot tears flow; with many a groan
My fainting spirit then replies,

If some short calm at last it may,
To think and feed fresh tears:—but no;
I am full of tossings to and fro
Unto the dawning of the day.

And when I fondly think to sleep,
Grim visions rise with aspect dire;
Then dropping down from deep to deep
Annihilated I expire,
Whilst grizly spectres me affray
With anguished cries and eyes that glow.
I am full of tossings to and fro
Unto the dawning of the day.

My bones are filled with feverish fire:
My tongue has nigh forgot to speak:
My couch is like a burning pyre:
My heart throbs wildly ere it break.
O God, my God, hear when I pray,
And help: no other help I know.
I am full of tossings to and fro
Unto the dawning of the day.

CCXX.

BEATEN by adverse winds from side to side;
My course obscured; both chart and compass lost;
My fragile bark by furious tempests toss'd:
Without a star or any mark to guide;
Drifted at mercy of the weltering tide,
That foams and roars upon an iron coast;
My will infirm; my better purpose cross'd;
In vain I seek o'er smoother seas to glide:

But Thou, O Lord, whose power can shield from harm,
And save the struggling soul from threatened ill,
Put forth the might of thy protecting arm,
And make my weakness strong in thy best will;
Be Thou my pilot through the angry storm,
And whisper to the tempest, Peace: be still!

CCXXI.

HAST thou kept faith through sorrows fathomless;
And gleaned thy meed of good from endless ill;
Through blood and fire never flinched or turned:
Counting men's praise as straw; their blame as less:
And, by the stern dominion of thy will,
Sat calm when all about thee seethed and burned?

Unthwarted by fierce passion's mastery,
Hast thou walked in the world of light with God,
Obedient to his better law; and clung
To truth; and given the lie to every lie;
Treading beneath thy feet, as Jesus trod,
The pleasures and the wealth before thee flung?

Hast thou drank in the morning-dawn like wine;
And kissed the dewdrop from the folded rose;
And learned the language of the wind and sea:
Yet left the lovèd summer's shade and shine
To hold companionship with human woes,
And watch by beds of moaning misery?

Then shalt thou find no enemy in Time;
And Death, whom all men fear, shall hold no strife
With thee; and scoffs of men shall fall like flakes
Of snow on fire, whilst thou dost sit sublime,
The crownèd monarch of a well spent life:
That empire which the Eternal Master makes
To those brave souls whose will is strong to climb.

CCXXII.

COUNSEL.

DEAR friends believe me earnest now
I bid you all my counsel prove,
Who God all reverent worship owe,
And men meet help and love.

No servitor of hound or chase,
Scorn thou the angle and the gun;
For, bird and beast, each to his place,
God made them every one.

But since for thee the brute must bleed,
And life which grows must life destroy,
So take it at thy natural need:
Thy duty; not thy joy.

Box, wrestle, ride the emulous race,
Row, cricket, use thy rifle well:
Thy British thews with ardour brace:
In everything excel.

Look not for honour nor estate:
Be to have lived and wrought thy gain.
On thy own self depend, nor wait
For help from gods or men.

Be firm: stand like the eternal rock
Which takes the buffet of the storm;
But stems the winds and waves that shock
Its front, and feels no harm.

Through fire and tempest, praise and blame
Keep thou thy life-path arrow-straight:
On fearsome sluggishness and shame
Ten thousand devils wait.

Be tolerant. God's large charities
Flow daily round the world: He gives
Unquestioning: all mankind in his
Vast Love and Power lives.

No creature in this world so base
Receives no ray from the Divine:
Keep thou content thy proper place;
Nor murmur, nor repine.

See uncondemned the rebel hate
God's law; and pity thou the doer;
Yet hold that law inviolate,
And live thou high and pure.

Let all thy earnest soul be set
To smooth the wrinkles of this world.
O'er haunts of sin and sorrow let
God's banner float unfurled.

Fix high thy standard: let it be
With Christ, great Monarch of our race:
Thy friends his friends; thy aim to see
His glory face to face.

Shun thou the pasture of the beast:
Great Nature, who can never cloy,
Shall clasp thee to her wholesome breast
And nourish thee with Joy;

Distil her sweetest influences
To purify thy mortal blood;
Teach thee her secret mysteries;
Feed thee on holy food:

And thou shalt see, at dawn and set
Of radiant suns, bright angels move;
Shalt read in every violet
God's message of large Love.

Have thou no title, nor a name,
Thy monument, pure deeds: not sloth:
So God shall give thee better fame,
And crown thee lord of Truth.

Thus blest and blessing go thy way,
Sowing in joyful hope good seed;
That men in aftertimes may say:
There lived a Man indeed.

CCXXIII.

WOULDST thou know how to change thy world to flowers;
In loftiest spheres of tranquil thought to move?
Content thee in the faith of Pregnant Hours,
And rest thee in the arms of Perfect Love.

CCXXIV.

COUPLETS.

DESPISE not thy lot, nor say, Why fust I unused in this prison?
The oak lay wrapt in the acorn or ever it towered to the sky.

*

Why shouldst thou say, Thus and thus is wasted the oil of existence?
He who can suffer in silence is not far from heaven and God.

*

Bright is the beautiful world to the eye of the soul that has suffered:
But to him who knows not sorrow Heaven no Heaven appears.

*

Learn to live: the uprisen sun smiles from the heaven above thee.

Learn to die: the tomb cold and dark is yawning to swallow thee up.

CCXXV.

MAY.

O May, with all thy flowres and thy green,
Right welcome be thou, fairè, freshè May!
CHAUCER.

THE stock-dove coos within the wood
Beyond the milkwhite thorn;
The lark is singing clear and loud
Above the springing corn.

No cloud upon the pure blue sky;
No stain upon the stream;
Peace everywhere:—I seem to walk
As in a heavenly dream.

Fresh daisies open at my feet;
The pensile hyacinth droops;
Each bank and meadow gilded with
Bright yellow buttercups.

All Nature, as a book unclaspt,
Before me seems to lie,
Wherein the shadows of the Past
Are open to my eye.

With friendly tenderness she beams
In sympathetic grace;
And smiles, as though she beckoned me
To come to her embrace.

My morn of life rains lightly down
Its silvery dews of dawn:
That daisy, glittering like a star,
Lights up the same green lawn.

I hear the gurgling of the brook,
The cuckoo in the glen;
The sunshine sparkles as it shone
About the coppice then.

I walk in early years once more
The long-familiar fields,
And every flower about my path
An ancient influence yields:

And every tree, new-clothed in green,
Looks as it looked of yore,
As still and grand as if those were
The very leaves it wore.

The simplest things I knew, imprest
By many a serious hour,
Renewed through added forces, stand
In monumental power.

So tranquilly the shadows lie
  Along the verdant plain,
That I would hardly wish to call
  My childhood back again.

Some loss the fleeting years may bring
  Through changes and decay;
Yet sure I am that they bestow
  More than they take away:—

The tenderness of thoughtful hours;
  Firm joy; abiding calm;
Deep sympathies and lofty hopes;
  Fond Memory's soothing balm;

The tempered fires; the strengthened will;
  The fruit of toil and pain;
Pure consecrations falling like
  Still showers of summer rain.

Thus, though harsh winter with his storms
  The blossomed dell bereaves,
The pale green frond again appears
  Above the withered leaves

Ere summer yet the tiny throat
  Hath plumed and taught to sing,
Or called the timid nestling forth
  To flap a fluttering wing.—

So blest the time, each rising wish
  Breathed on the limpid air
Seems wafted backwards to the soul,
  A richly answered prayer.

Even parted friends come back again
  In quiet hours like these:
I hear their voices through the pines,
  Their breath is in the breeze.

The sounds that soothe my listening soul
  Are echoes of their bliss:
The shadows of that other world
  Are sunshine upon this.

The symbols of material things
  Reveal their hidden sense;
And for their evanescence bring
  Enduring recompence:

A sublimated essence which
  Can never see decay,
Centred within a purer life
  That will not pass away:

Clear fountain of ethereal joy,
  Fine source of visions rare,
The sister splendours of whose grace
  Are bred in heavenly air.

To him whose apprehensions grow
With Love and Truth allied
This world becomes an Eden, by
The spirit sanctified.—

Half hid amongst the dewy elms,
The rooks resounding quire,
Smit by the morning, rises up
The pointed village-spire.

Though I have heard delicious strains,
Yet in my heart there dwells
No dearer echo than the sound
Of those clear sabbath-bells:

For sometimes in my troubled moods
A gentle calm they yield
Blent with the honeyed odour of
The purple clover field:

And sometimes through my waking dreams
They seem to fall and die,
As though their pealing floated from
Some region of the sky:

And oft in pensive hours, their round
Aerial whispers brings,
Mixed with the vague sweet murmurs of
Life's undiscovered springs—

Mysterious motions lightly borne
From shadowy realms of thought,
Where all that is seems but the show
Of something that is not.

They tremble o'er the willowy stream;
They reach the distant town;
When stars come out at evening
They fling their music down,

About those dim green hillocks where,
Beneath the yew tree's arms,
The slumbering dead are laid in peace,
Secure from life's alarms.—

Through all our search for happiness
We know not what is best:
But surely they must be content
Who find so hushed a rest.

Blow, gentle breeze, around them blow
Thy blossom-scented breath:
If still their blessèd souls may know
Thy sweetness, locked in death,

Their angels leaning from the spheres
Might turn them from their bliss,
And drink a dear past memory
Breathed through thy balmy kiss,

And find blest recollections in
The clacking of the mill,
That floats in airy circles, blown
About the echoing hill.

No: do not let us think that all
Within this world is vain
To those whose weary souls have left
Its sorrows and its pain:

Nor those warm hearts whose deep-set love
Fond memories intertwined
Could leave their earthly homes below
And never look behind.

Who is there that has loved and lived
His life's delight to mourn,
Who, sometime, may have never felt
The parted one's return:—

A thin-drawn vision wafted by,
A low-breathed whispering,
A tender touch, the flutter of
A spiritual wing;

The shadow of a smile that once
Would light the beauteous face
Which lies beneath the grass and flowers,
Hid in death's narrow place:—

Abiding links that still enchain
  Sweet friends to those they miss
With kisses that will linger still
  On lips too cold to kiss ?—

Ah, well: our earthly state is fixed;
  Such is the mortal doom;
Our frames but make a little dust
  From which a rose may bloom.

But who shall touch the soul's high throne,
  And bid it there expire ?
Can death within his icy grasp
  Crush out the spirit's fire ?

Even here good men retain their life,
  Though vanished from the sense,
And breathe through high-toned spirits their
  Exalted influence.

The greatness that ambition seeks
  May grasp its diadem;
But what a loftier destiny
  To live and grow with them !

The splendours of imperial pomp,
  The pride of human power,
High birth and name and fame are but
  The playthings of an hour.

It is not marble makes man great
Or noble with his kind,
Nor costly blazonry; but those
Good deeds he leaves behind.

No epic honours they will crave,
No noisy praise their lot:
But just to live a grand, true life,
And then to be forgot.

And only wish their names be writ,
For angel eyes to scan,
Amongst those heroes noted in
God's history of man.

By monumental effigies
Uncrushed, at last, to lie
Beneath a little patch of flowers
And God's unbounded sky.—

For me, I only ask to share,
Away from worldly noise,
The tender love of gentle hearts;
Their troubles and their joys:

To read on Nature's ample page
The message that it brings;
The wonders of Eternal Power
Expressed in simple things:

To trace within a painted flower
The mighty Hand that laid
The earth's profound foundations when
The universe was made;

Whose chariot is the roaring storm,
His coursers snow and hail;
Who sows the gulfs of space with stars,
And sees them grow and fail.

Who dwells within pure halls of light,
And hears the mighty hymn
That bursts creation's mighty bounds,
And thunders under Him:

A strain to bear the raptured soul
Where footstep never trod,
From world to world until it stands
In presence of its God.

Thus let me live, secure, content,
Through life's soon passing day,
And in my spirit's freshness find
An everlasting May.

CCXXVI.

OFT, when the glorious beams of sunset burning,
Fill all the shining west with golden glow,
I cry, from shades of mortal sorrow turning,
Behold the land to which my soul would go!

And then an angel, from the sky descending,
Breathes through the world in tones of love and bliss:
He with whose human soul heaven's light is blending
Need ask no fairer Paradise than this.

CCXXVII.

TO THE GENIUS OF MY COLOUR BOX.

KINGS in gorgeous hues may shine;
But they cannot match with thine.
Warm and cold in mystic tie,
Accident and harmony
Combine to make a radiant world
In alternating tints unfurled.—
What bright glories are there hid
Underneath thy varnished lid!
What crisp landscapes from the eye
In thy colours latent lie!
No season of the rounding year
Brings a change which is not here.

Sometimes in the budding spring
Fresh with April's showering,
The early lark rejoicing loud
From his throne of gilded cloud,
We will linger by the fold
Whilst the morning is unrolled:
Birds with blissful carolling
Making all the woodland ring:
The throstle from the daisied croft
Warbling clear; the cuckoo oft

Calling through the flowery glen
Till the cliffs cuckoo again;
The lovèd linnet sweet of note
Straining merrily his throat,
And, in the mossy orchard near,
Red robin with so blithe a cheer
You could not think his winter strain
Was half so sad or full of pain.

Then, clothèd in her kirtle blue,
The merry milking-maid trips through,
With balanced pail, the garden hatch.
On the smoking cottage-thatch,
Streaming through the dewy boughs
Wavering sunshine twinkling flows;
And twittering swallows, round and round,
In airy circles skim the pond.

When the rook hath filled her nest
Lads and lasses don their best;
With rose and buckle well beseen,
Hasting to the village green,
Where the Maypole lifts its head
Wreath and ribbon-garlanded,
And keep the revel all day long
With mirth and laughter, dance and song.

Then let us climb, some sparkling morn,
The ridgèd mountain rent and torn
With storms of ages; toiling on
Towards the region of the sun;

Scarcely turning till we gaze
From the top in awed amaze.
Round us what a prospect lies,
From our rock-throne in the skies!
Snowy clouds below us creep;
Over valleys dark and deep
Rolling slow, like living things
Sailing on invisible wings:
Glimpses of the green world under
When their veil is rent asunder:
Gloomy forest; mountain pass;
Shining lakes of molten glass;
Silver-threaded rivers rolled
By town and village, farm and fold:
At the horizon's furthest rim
The ocean like a vapour dim.—
Ah, no longer we are mortal:
We have passed Death's dreary portal:
A wondrous region round us lies
Bright with dews of Paradise!

Sometimes, in the sultry noon
When the lark has sung his tune,
We will seek some sylvan nook
Where a clear and purling brook,
Shaded by thick-leavèd trees,
Ripples to the roving breeze
With a moan most musical
Broke by many a tumbling fall.
Amongst his crisping water-ways
The flashing troutlet frisks and plays,

From gurgling shallows leaping high
To catch the flitting dragon-fly:
Knee-deep the cows from neighbouring vale
Flap their sides with lazy tail.—
Here some book of antique lore.
Romaunt of love or troubadour,
Tournament or minstrel lay,
Shall help to dream the time away.

Or, in the middle of a mead
Fringed about with sedge and reed,
Let us, by some lonely pool,
Rest amidst the shadows cool:
Struggling through the alder-bush
Umbel of the flowering-rush;
Scented willowherb and brown
Spike of sturdy bulrush crown
Rising near; and where we lie,
Woodsorrel with its snowy eye
Opening through the tender green
Of moss and tiny leaf between:
A branchy network overhead
Of giant trees, and, high outspread,
A sky of purest summer blue
In chequered patches glinting through:
A withered oak, grown grey and old
Through a hundred winters' cold,
Knotted, gnarled and twisted so,
One wonders how it wished to grow,
Like some gaunt sibyl at the brink
Bends and bows, but may not drink.

We will read quaint legends there;
Many a story pictured clear;
Half unveiled the Future's face
On the dark unruffled glass.
Not a note of wakeful bird,
Near or far, is ever heard;
Not a breath or whisper stirs:
Still as a band of worshippers
Hushed in holy temple fanes
When one deep prayer each soul enchains.

Or, down the lane ablaze with furze
We will seek the haymakers;
Toss the perfumed grass abroad;
Or pile the huge top-heavy load:
Sometimes lolling in the sun
Fanned by luscious airs of June:
Or a tawny haycock's shade
Our half-sleepy couch be made,
Lulled by winds that softly roar
Through a neighbouring sycamore.

Then let us to the purple heath;
Inhale the fragrant sweetgale breath
Where the wide embrownèd ground
Stretches like an ocean round:
No sign of man that may be traced;
Not a tree to mark the waste:
Only narrow pools which lie
Shining to the shining sky:
Waving o'er the black morass
Tufted plumes of cottongrass;

Pale buckbean with fringèd flower
Sparkling under every shower;
Golden stars of asphodel,
With knops of clustered heatherbell
And tender sundew—broidery fair
Any queen might wish to wear.
We shall find the freckled snake
Sleeping in a tangled brake
Of cranberry and crooked ling
Curlèd in a threefold ring:
Wheeling over where we sit
The curlew with a shrill 'tewit':
And buntings wailing round distrest
To lure us from the neighbouring nest.—
Then we dream midst breezes bland
Of some happy fairy land
On the curling cloud that lies
Anchored in the tranquil skies.
What wondrous visions may be known
From those snow-cliffs near the sun,
Where thin vapours roll and creep
By silvery tarns below the steep!
What glimmering glories might we find
In sheltered vales of low-blown wind:
Iris waves of shade and shine
Trembling through the air divine,
Weaving pearly tissue rare,
Web of frailest gossamer!
Then the purple bickering fires,
Cones of crimson-crested spires,
Golden-netted capes and flowers
Brighter, purer far than ours—

How shall words of poet sing
On this green earth muttering ?—
Ah, how very sweet to be
In that blessèd land with thee,
In spiritual innocence,
Purified from sin and sense !—
Friendly winds that come and go
Blow us to that region, blow ;
Help us to a loftier flight
Radiant roads of laddered light :
Or stoop, bright cloud, and bid us rise
With thee to azure-crownèd skies !

Then, where fretting eddies whirl,
We shall see the village girl,
In scarlet cloak and ribbon blue,
With happy features beaming through,
Flecked with lights and shadows warm,
A basket slung upon her arm,
Tripping timidly alone,
Pausing on a stepping-stone,
Watching with a maiden grace
The broken fragments of her face
Trembling in the dimpled pool.

Or children pouring out of school,
Where the sable-vested sage
Scans the torn and blotted page
With a rueful countenance—
Lowering cloud of stern mischance
To the culprit as he stands
Conic-capped with rod in hands.

Or, the heat and labour o'er,
The husbandman at cottage door;
Children climbing round his knee;
The mother smiling tranquilly;
Inhaling in contented mood
Breath of homely southernwood,
Sweets of honeysuckle met
By the scent of mignonette;
With such simple talk as may
Serve to wile the hour away:
Proving how hard toil may bless
Love's delicious idleness,
Wearing for a royal crown
Gold and jewels all its own:
So that many a king might pray
For such ending of a day.

Or, wandering through grave cedarn alleys,
Level lawns and terraced valleys,
Linden walks and laurel groves
Which the warbling blackbird loves,
We shall hear the ringdove call,
Tinkling fountains lightly fall,
And, more the charmèd sense to please,
Marble nymphs and deities
Ranged against the sober green:
Through ancestral elms are seen
Twisted chimney, gable high,
Turret tall against the sky,
Mullioned casement, round which grows,
In many a wreath, the gadding rose,

Where, gazing in and out by fits,
Queenlike Amaryllis sits
In panelled chamber cunning-wrought,
Dreaming in delicious thought;
Such sweet lights within her eyes
As through summer evenings rise;
Whose tralucent depths disclose
The fulness of the soul's repose;
Amber locks adropping down,
Glittering like an angel's crown
About her soft, peach-bloomèd cheek,
Around her ivory sculptured neck;
The mute lute fallen from her hand,
She dreams of some far-distant land
Where summer breathes perpetual calm
Through cinctured stems of fruited palm
And citron orchards blown upon
From groves of myrrh and cinnamon,
Home of humming-birds, where flies
The sailing bird of paradise;
Twining wreaths of odorous flowers
Engarlanding the rainbow bowers;
Peering through thick-clustered bine
Faint meres of tender hyaline;
Blossomed flakes of foliage rank
Hanging ravished o'er the bank,
Weeping many a spicy tear
For love of what is mirrored there.

When the bee with lulling chime
Roams the overblossomed thyme,

Buzzing over tufted plot
Of milkwort and sweet melilot,
Heath-cushioned let us dreaming lie
On some warm hill-top rising nigh
A sombre grove of murmurous pines,
As the summer day declines;
A golden river flowing through
Green sloping fields and hamlets blue;
Grey towers and white villages
Half hidden in ambrosial trees;
Oft crossing, stretched from heath and lane,
Dark hedgerows mark the varied plain;
From the speckled lea below
Comes, faintly borne, the heifer's low;
A railway train with trail of steam
Glides far away with faint-heard scream;
Over all, in farthest west,
The gorgeous sun sinks down to rest
Where the river, bright and wide
Rolls its crimson glowing tide
Towards the sea: from earth and skies
The glorious gates of Paradise
Half unclosed that men may gaze
Upon its splendour face to face.

Or, when day is almost gone,
Musing in some grove alone,
We will find the sacred spot:
Bubbling font or crystal grot,
Where the woodnymphs haunt and lave
Their snowy forms amidst the wave:

Or merry fairies frisk about
In wreathèd dance and jovial rout;
The scarèd owlet o'er the crew
Flitting with his wild 'to-whoo!'
Whilst the nightingale her psalm
Sings softly through the distant calm.

Now the mist is on the meadow;
Grey trees neither light nor shadow;
Glimmering through the autumn morn
Sun-tanned stooks of sheavèd corn;
The low-breathed west is hushed, nor stirs
The dewy beaded gossamers
That hang where tawny bindweed throws
White cups about the brown hedgerows,
Where briony with berries green
And clustered blackberries are seen.
In the garth red apples mellow
Gleam through foliage autumn-yellow;
Luscious pear and purple plum:
Gold-banded wasps with thievish hum
Gorging at the sugary core.
Then let us, pencil-handed, pore
Where mingled tints and hues emboss
Each bole with vary-coloured moss—
Where tiny grasses wave and creep,
And small-eyed blossoms hide and peep—
Lair of lady-birds, rare prize
Of gorgeous-wingèd butterflies.

But, hark! what shouts and laughter come
Breeze-borne! It is the Harvest Home.

Yonder creaks the laden wain
Rocking down the dusty lane,
Brushed by overhanging boughs:
Berry-brown, with corn-wreathed brows,
Men and maidens lightly dancing
In the sunshine's golden glancing;
Chubby children fair to see
Overflowing in their glee.
When the happy day is done
We will join the mirth and fun;
Dance amongst the jovial throng;
Chorus to the reaper's song;
Crown the feast with foaming ale,
Jest and laugh and merry tale.

See the weary hollyhock
Drooping on its withered stalk;
In his last pale pink repose
Leans the rose against a rose;
Lilies sicken, fuchsias fail,
Fainting in the sunlight pale:
Still to mourn the ruin come
Aster and chrysanthemum,
Anemone and gentian blue
Where golden daffodillies blew.
Now the day is going to rest,
The red sun falling in the west;
Slowly waking from their sleep,
White mists through the valley creep;
Round the hill the vapour twines
Rising to its crest of pines,

Steeping chilly field and fold,
Whilst robin hides away for cold.
By the homestead ingle then
Gather gladly maids and men:
Nothing mirth and laughter stays,
Sitting by the cheerful blaze.
Tom must sing of Kit and Clare;
How they danced at wake and fair,
And how church-bells with merry tone
Rang them, one spring morning, one.
Then a tale of ghastly maid
Who walks in white the midnight glade;
Of wastes and blight that fall when she
Is heard in doleful minstrelsy.
All start up when John says, Hark!
Surely that was Juno's bark!
Then turn their fears with laughter light,
As each bids each a warm goodnight.

Hoary winter now is near,
Pale and cold, but blithe of cheer,
With jolly Christmas arm in arm,
Through frost and snow to keep him warm;
Ply his heart with generous wine
Till his old eyes twinkling shine;
Give him welcome so he send
A good yule log and genial friend,
Plum-puddings huge and junkets plenty,
Rosy lips and kisses dainty,
Holly green and mistletoe,
Large-hearted love for friend and foe,

Charity for beggar old,
And good frieze coat to warm the cold;
By cottage hearth, in lordly hall
Peace and mirth and merryfall.

Thus, dear friend, and still together
In stormy times and pleasant weather,
We will go through blame and praise
Placid in our pearly greys,
Unstained in white, unsoiled in mellow
Magic tones of brown and yellow;
Our world shall glow with radiant sheen,
In wondrous hues of red and green:
And when, at last, my trusty friend,
Our happy life shall come to end,
Buried together you and I
Will in some cemetery lie,
Quiet, in the breezy spot
Where we oft have toiled and thought;
An ample river flowing by:
No marble tomb to hide the sky,
But grass alive to sun and dew,
With modest daisies peeping through;
And but a simple headstone near
To tell the passer who lies there.

CCXXVIII.

A CHRISTMAS CAROL.

'TWAS Christmas eve, and the old minster clock
Had scarcely clanged a muffled twelve and ceased,
With dull vibration humming through the stone,
Crocket and finial, struggling towards the sky,
And lost itself, and found itself, and ceased;
As I lay wakeful, on the verge of sleep:
Now saw the moonbeam on the wall, and now
Lost will and motion in enchanted dreams,
When a rare strain came floating down the street,
Tender and low as though soft snow-flakes fell
On snow-flakes, making music; thus it ran:

When underneath the night the swelling plain
Of Bethlehem lay dumb from rim to rim—
Shine on us from thy radiant realms afar!—

The watching shepherds with mysterious awe
First saw thee fill the heavens with light and sang:
Shine on us from thy radiant realms afar!

And angel-voices fell: Glory to God
In the highest: on earth peace: goodwill towards men.
Shine on us from thy radiant realms afar!

Still be our pilot to the Just and True;
And lead us to the Christ we love and seek.
Shine on us from thy radiant realms afar

And let his love be on us, blessing all;
And grant us charity to feel for all.
Shine on us from thy radiant realms afar!

So may the great Good Shepherd gather us,
One fold in bliss and glory, light and love.
Shine on us from thy radiant realms afar!

Then, lingering, died. From land to land I roved
Through a white world: pure white with Christmas snow
That lay beneath a heaven sole-tenanted
By one bright star: more bright than moon or sun;
Where little children walked in robes of white,
And men and women, clothed in sinless white,
In bands, or two and two, with clean white hands
And holy faces steeped in inward bliss,
Walked the white world, and sang in rapturous joy,
On mount, in vale, or where the limitless sea
Slept like an angel in unbroken rest:
Shine on us from thy radiant realms, sweet Star!

York, Christmas 1860.

CCXXIX.

ORIPIDA.

MARSADAS slain, Ajolfo lay for long
Wounded and sore; and saw the mornings rise
Impatient, and the golden sunsets fail
Regretful: for he said, 'Tis all unmeet
That I, a strong-thewed warrior, rust unused
When all the world is full of wrongs and waits

This goodly sword to right them. Oftentimes
The artist Fancy came, and painted him
Lionida more fair than angels are:
And in the stillness of the starred midnight
Sometimes he woke as though he heard her name,
Lionida, lisped lightly through the room;
Then slept again to dream his happy dream,
So calm and glad he almost sighed at morn.

One day he rose, and dressed himself, and sat
Beside the window, watching where the sun
Burned round the blackened shadows of the trees;
And all the sky was like a flaming vault
Of burnished steel: the loud cicala screeched
His scrannel note; but every bird was hushed
In woodland glooms; a gurgling fountain fell
And splashed ith' court; when Oripida prayed
Her mother, queen, and wife of Danacon,
That she might visit this brave knight whose sword
Had freed her father's kingdom from his foe.—
Whenas she knelt before him, she and all
Her maids, he rose, and with a knightly grace
Raised her, and kissed her hand with courtly speech:
Then listened whilst the queen poured forth a strain
Of well-turned phrase and turgid compliment,
With many words too long and strong for truth:
Until at last they left him, wearied out,
To reap once more the harvest of his thought
In quiet mood and calm.

But not so she,
The beauteous Oripida: nevermore

Could any sunny morning bring her back
Her happy-hearted childhood free from care
As once it was, but ne'er should be again;
For she had passed the Eden bounds of youth
And stood with men and women: Thought and Care
Now called her sister: happiness was gone.

Long time she bore her weight of maiden grief
Untold, until her cheeks grew pale and all
Her heart seemed fire: so at the last she went
To Farlet, dwarf and servitor to him
She loved, and bade him tell Ajolfo how
She loved him like to die. But Farlet said,
I fear he may be angry. No, she said,
No gentle nature e'er refused his love
To one who loved him. So the roguish dwarf
Went to Ajolfo laughingly and told
Him all. Yes, said Ajolfo, it is true;
Love asks for love: and paused wrapt in deep thought,
Feeling a hundred thousand little flames
Flutter about his heart which entered not.
But Farlet, seeing that he paused, rejoined:
Whom dost thou love? Then, waking from his dream:
I have no love at all, he said, until
I see Lionida whom thy fair words
Have placed within the temple of my heart
The worshipped wonder of its inmost shrine.
Leave all to me, said Farlet. And, with this,
He went to Oripida, telling her
Ajolfo loved her more than life itself.
So with a secret joy she prayed the queen
To go to him she loved, ambassadress

Of love: who went and sought his room and said,
O, Stranger Knight, thy wounds are almost healed:
But ere thou leave us I would crave a boon.
Madam, he said, how should I grant a boon
To one whose wishes are my law: a grace
You do me in the asking: wholly yours.
Then said the queen, The thing I ask is, that
You ask somewhat of me. My faith, he said,
If you would serve me to my utmost wish,
Give me a sheep-skin coat with all the fleece
Unshorn upon it. So she promised him.—
Then Orípida called her maidens round
And, taking costliest stuffs of woven gold,
Made him a wondrous vest; the upper half
A snowy fleece; below, a miracle
Of cunning work, and, by the counsel of
An old wise henchman, there was wrought thereon
A shield, and, on its ground of spotless white,
A head of unicorn; for,—so he said,—
'Twill prove a sign: since by a maiden pure
The unicorn is taken willingly.
And so the work was finished.

Three days passed,
When in the pleasant shade of orange trees
Ajolfo, with his dwarf, walked to and fro,
Whom Oripida saw, whose longing eyes
Were always swift to see: moreover saw
No other save the dwarf; then lightly sped,
And threw her arms about his neck before
He thought, and kissed him greedily:
Not such a kiss as women give each other,

But an electric fire that overflowed
Her heart and burst to flame at touch of lips,
Sweetening the issue: but Ajolfo, pained,
Repulsed her. Noble damsel, said he, has
The king, your royal father, honoured me
That I should do him wrong and wrong you too?
Then, filled with tingling shame from head to foot,
She fled: but soon her passion chased
All shame away; and, throwing down her hair,
She bruised her face and tore her dress, and thus
Appeared before the queen, and, weeping, cried:
Behold what he hath done, the Stranger Knight,
To shame me in the presence of the dwarf!
And so the queen, right angry, told the king.
But, musing pensively, Ajolfo passed,
Tossed by a thousand doubts, into his room;
Then sent the dwarf where Danacon held court
To listen for the end; who, when he heard
The accusation of the queen, returned
And told Ajolfo, warning him to flee.

Then as the steeds were saddled, and they stood
About to go, the henchman crossed the court
And asked them, Whither go you? And the dwarf:
To Pamphalonia. So he told the king;
Who stroked a snowy beard and, musing, said,
'Tis true, no doubt: for this he flies: and sought
To soothe his daughter. Let him go, he said;
Well come, well gone, and think no more of him:
Hoping to comfort her: but soon he saw
The fierce emotion flame o'er all her face
And fade to deadly paleness: so he knew

His daughter loved the Knight, and, smiling, left
The chamber. Then she closed the door, and took
A sword, and hid it in the bed, and called
The ancient shield-bearer, and said to him:
If that you hold a little love for me
Ride quickly, seek the Stranger and the dwarf
And learn their journey's end, and bring me word.
Nay, said he, that I knew or e'er they went:
They go to Pamphalonia. Then she sighed,
And all her heart died in her; for she knew
Lionida was there, and how fair fame
Had blown her name about the land as one
Who wore the crown of beauty and was held
Quiver of all Love's arrows, and, she knew,
Would prove a buckler 'twixt her heart and his.
Then, turning to the henchman: Take this shield
And broidered vest, she said, and likewise bear
This letter to him quickly. And he went.

She sat and listened till his horse's hoofs
Had died in distance: then she took the sword
And fixed the pummel to the wall and laid
Her bosom to the point and sprang upon it,
Shrieking and falling. So the king and queen
Came hasting to the chamber where she lay
Upon the floor, all steeped in blood: but ere
They came she gave a ghastly moan and died.—
The queen wept stormily; but, in his grief,
The king thought of Ajolfo left the land,
For whom his kingdom must the poorer prove.

Ajolfo rode for many days until
He reached a flowing stream whenas the sun
Stood near the zenith. There he paused awhile,
And, stretched in grateful shade, went brooding o'er
His strange adventure; when there came to him
The grey old shield-bearer and greeted him,
And gave the letter to him. Read, he said
To Farlet. Farlet read, and thus it ran:
To thee, O noble Knight, with mine own hand
I write in haste, which nevermore will write,
With tears and sighs saluting thee. Blind Love,
Who has deceived me, leads me to cold death
Where thou must follow. Thou hast left this realm
Through my sad chance: for this my heart is filled
With burning pains, for I have loved thee so
As maiden never loved who loves again.
Ere he who bears this letter shall arrive
Death will have found me by my own sure hand.
A shield and vest I send, and for the love
I bear, wear them, and sometimes think of me.—
Thus closed the scroll with Oripida's name.

Ajolfo sighed: the ancient wept: the dwarf
Was sad, but crafty as a fox that knows
His scent; and, knowing ways of treachery,
Bade him who brought them don the vest
And kiss the shield, lest subtle poison might
Be borne by them. Ajolfo took the gifts
And gave his shield and bade the messenger
Bear it to Danacon: And so he did;
Which, Danacon receiving, hung above
His bed, and night and morning thought of him;

The bravest warrior he had ever known,
To whom he owed his kingdom: every year
Holding a solemn feast unto his gods
The day Ajolfo had Marsadas slain.

CCXXX.

THE GOLDEN WAVE.

IF ever in the vale of Tivoli
You wander through a summer's afternoon,
By grot and tinkling fountain garlanded
With many a wreath of twining foliage,
Pause at the bridge and drink the gushing wave
That streams in sparkling coolness from the rock.
They call it 'acqua d' oro': so it is:
As limpid and as pure as if some nymph
Had filled her urn with glittering diamonds
And thawed them with her breath—all sweetest airs
Blown from the heart oth' woodland—pouring them,
That he who drinks might feel his soul within
Changed into such a mad rusticity
As half to wish he were but free to go
A spirit through the trees and rocks and flowers,
To thread the bosky dells invisible
To mortal eye; a sunbeam in the sun,
A shadow in the shade; so much a part
Of all he lives amongst, that where he goes
The sharp-eyed lizard even might not flee:
So might he have for pleasant memories
No other vision than the fairest flowers,
That blue, blue sky, those ever verdant banks,

And, mingling with the summer wind that sighs
Amongst the olives when the nightingale
Rolls his rich melody beneath the moon,
(The harsh cicala silent in the trees:)
Might float through happy dreams to lullaby
Of light-blown murmurs of the waterfalls
Which hang their hoary wreaths from cliff to cliff,
For ever sounding through the sounding vale.

Tivoli, July 20, 1865.

CCXXXI.

DEAR Muse, on windy wolds, by rushy meres,
O'er hill and dale, through many a varied land
Our course has been together hand in hand,
Proving the sun of joy, the rain of tears;
Still be the beacon of my mortal years,
And by thy ruling presence, harsh or bland,
Further my sovran purpose, and command
All passion and all joy, griefs, hopes and fears
To shape through phases of the various mind
A nobler life, with wider sympathies
For every creature formed of earthly clay:
To grasp the good, to leave the bad behind:
That all I gain and hold be but the prize
Which budding April brings to full-blown May.

POSTSCRIPT.

THE author of these Songs thinks it right to state that numbers LXI, LXXIX, LXXXI, CXLVIII, CCXXIX are from stories or legends not originated by him, which he has done little more than versify. The motive of number XL is, to some extent, suggested by an Italian sonnet by Marini. He has also borrowed a figure in number LXXXVII (verse 17) from the Indian Epic, Ramayana: number LXXXII owes its origin to the same source. He believes that this list includes all his literary obligations, excepting those of broad, general influences.

It may also be mentioned, that three or four of the Songs have already been published in forgotten Magazines: the rest are now printed for the first time.

August 1869.

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